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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Sunak bows out as Labour's Starmer wins

Labour Party's triumph ends 14 years of Conservative rule in the UK with historic landslide vote

LONDON, 5 JULY

Keir Starmer became UK's new Prime Minister on Friday ended the 14-year rule of the Conservatives and vowed to rebuild Britain, hours after his Labour Party secured a landslide victory in a general election in which the weary voters inflicted a "sobering verdict" on Rishi Sunak-led Conservatives, who suffered their worst electoral drubbing.

The Conservatives were in power for 14 years and the party suffered its worst election defeat in history losing 250 MPs this time.

Starmer, 61, assumed charge as the 58th Prime Minister after his customary audience with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, following Sunak's meeting with the British monarch.

The Labour Party secured 412 seats in the 650-member House of Commons, up 211 from the last election in 2019. Sunak's Conservatives won just 121 seats, down 250 seats from the previous election.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer kisses his wife Victoria at Tate Modern in London; Britain's outgoing Conservative Party PM Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty leave 10 Downing Street to meet King Charles III and tender his resignation ***PHOTO: AP/PTI***

While the Labour had a vote share of 33.7 per cent the Conservatives had 23.7 per cent. As leader of a new Labour Party-led government, Starmer said that the work ahead is "urgent and we begin it today". However, he said this would not be as simple as "flicking a switch".

"When the gap between the sacrifices made by people and the service they receive from politicians grows this big, it leads to the weariness in the heart of a nation, a draining away of the hope, the spirit, the belief in a better future. But we need to move forward together," he said.

Starmer acknowledged that the lack of trust could only be healed by actions, not words and pledged that his government would treat every single person in the country with respect.

He noted: "If you voted Labour yesterday, we will carry the responsibility of your trust as we rebuild our country. But whether you voted Labour or not, in fact, especially if you did not, I say to you directly: 'my government will serve you'.

The incoming prime minister also had warm words for his 44-year-old predecessor, Sunak, who he praised for an added accomplishment.

Sunak, the country's first British Indian prime minister comfortably held on to his own Richmond and Northallerton seat in northern England with 23,059 votes. In a reflective farewell speech in the same place where he had called for the snap election six weeks earlier, Sunak wished Starmer all the best but also acknowledged his missteps. *—AP*

>>>More on Page 3, 5, 6, & 7

> **We did it! Change begins now. Our country has voted decisively for national renewal**
>
> - Keir Starmer, UK Prime Minister

> **I am sorry, I have given this job my all but you've sent a clear signal that the Government of the United Kingdom must change**
>
> - Rishi Sunak, Former UK Prime Minister

> **Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Keir Starmer on the remarkable victory in the UK general elections. Thank you, Rishi Sunak, for your admirable leadership of the UK, and your active contribution to deepen the ties between India and the UK**
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

SC to hear against same-sex marriage verdict on 10 July

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Supreme Court is scheduled to consider on 10 July a batch of pleas seeking review of its last year's judgement which refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage. According to the cause list of 10 July uploaded on the apex court website, a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud would consider in chambers the pleas seeking review of the 17 October last year verdict. In a setback to gay rights activists, there was "no unqualified right" to marriage with the exception of those that are recognised by law. The apex court, however, had made a strong pitch for the rights of queer people so they don't face discrimination in accessing goods and services. *—PTI*

RBI cancels licence of State's Shimsha Sahakara Bank

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

RBI has cancelled the licence of Shimsha Sahakara Bank Niyamitha, Maddur (Karnataka) in the wake of its worsening financial position. Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on Friday, Reserve Bank said. The Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Karnataka has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to Rs 5 lakh. *—PTI*

Bihar suspends 15 engineers over bridge collapses

PATNA, 5 JULY

The Bihar government on Friday suspended 15 engineers in connection with a series of recent incidents of bridge collapse in the state, a senior official said. The decision was taken after a probe panel submitted its report to the Water Resources Department (WRD). "It was found that engineers were negligent and monitoring was ineffective... that is the main reason behind the collapse of small bridges and causeways in the state," Additional Chief Secretary of WRD, Chaitanya Prasad, told reporters here Those suspended include three executive engineers. A total of 10 bridges collapsed in Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, East Champaran and Kishanganj districts in the past 17 days, officials said. *—PTI*

GALLANTRY AWARDS

President Droupadi Murmu confers Shaurya Chakra upon Major Mustafa Bohara posthumously during the Defence Investiture Ceremony-2024, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Asteroid hitting Earth a real possibility: ISRO

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said that Apophis, a near-Earth asteroid with a diameter of 370m, will pass by Earth on 13 April, 2029, and again in 2036. Apophis is considered one of the most hazardous asteroids.

The impact from an asteroid 10km or larger is considered an extinction-scale event, causing most of the species to perish. This type of impact is hypothesised to have caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. Space agencies worldwide are working to develop planetary defense capabilities to protect Earth from such threats.

On 30 June, 1908 a huge air blast from an asteroid flattened about 2,200 sq km of dense forest, in Tunguska, Siberia destroying nearly 80 million trees. ISRO Chief S Somanath highlighted the importance of planetary defense, noting, "Our lifespan is 70-80 years, and we don't often witness such catastrophes, leading us to believe they are unlikely. However, if we examine the history of the world and the universe, these events are frequent. The approach and impact of asteroids on planets are real possibilities. I have observed an asteroid hitting Jupiter, such as the Shoemaker-Levy collision. If a similar event occurs on Earth, it could lead to our extinction. We must prepare ourselves for these possibilities." *—Salar News*

In SC, Centre & NTA oppose cancellation of NEET-UG

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Amid the growing clamour for cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG, 2024 exam over alleged malpractices, Centre and National Testing Agency told Supreme Court on Friday that scrapping it would be "counterproductive" and "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality.

Union Education Ministry and NTA filed separate affidavits opposing the pleas which have sought scrapping of the exam plagued by controversy, a re-test and court-monitored probe into entire gamut of issues involved.

In their responses, they said CBI, the country's premier investigating agency, has taken over the cases registered in different states.

Centre said in any examination, there were competing rights, and interests of a large number of students who take it without adopting any unfair means must also not be jeopardised.

NTA, in its separate affidavit, reiterated the Centre's stand and said: "The cancellation of the entire examination on the basis of the aforesaid factor, would be hugely counterproductive and significantly harmful to the larger public interest, especially to the career prospects of the qualified candidates."

The government said it has constituted a high-level committee of experts to suggest effective measures for conducting transparent, smooth and fair examinations by NTA.

The affidavit said the panel shall make recommendations on reforms in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and structure, and functioning of NTA. *—PTI*

Students holding placards protest outside the Ministry of Education against the cancellation of the UGC-NET in New Delhi ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEET-PG to be held on 11 Aug

NEET-PG 2024 examination will be held on 11 August in two shifts, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences said on Friday. The exam was earlier scheduled to be held on 23 June. "The cut-off date for the eligibility to appear in NEET-PG shall continue to be 15 August, 2024," it said.

77 WILD ANIMALS DEAD IN KAZIRANGA AMID ASSAM FLOODS

GUWAHATI, 5 JULY

A total of 77 wild animals have died, either due to drowning or during treatment, while 94 others have been rescued from floodwaters in the worst deluge in recent years inside the famed Kaziranga National Park as of Friday, according to a park official.

The animal mortality has risen from Thursday's toll of 31 and comprises three rhinos, 62 hog deer, and an otter due to drowning in the park, with 11 dying during treatment. Forest officials rescued 85 hog deer, two sambar, two scops owls, and one each of a rhino calf, Indian hare, otter, elephant, and a jungle cat. Currently, 33 animals are under medical care, while 50 others have been released after treatment, the official said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

BMRCL TO PLY MORE METROS FROM MAJESTIC

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) on Friday introduced additional services from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station, Majestic, to Whitefield by revising the timetable of Namma Metro Purple Line with effect from Saturday, officials said.

Fifteen trains will be originating from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station instead of nine at present. Out of these 15 trains, 10 will run up to Pattanduru Agrahara (ITPL), four up to Whitefield and one up to Baiyappanahalli station, they said.

"During morning hours, trains will originate from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station at 8.48, 8.58, 9.08, 9.18, 9.29, 9.39, 9.50, 10.00, 10.11, 10.21, 10.39, 10.50,11.00, 11.11, 11.22 towards the east. In addition, there will be regular passing trains too, at 3.3-minute headway at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station up to 10.25am," BMRCL said.

Of the 14 trains presently terminating at Garudacharpalya, six are extended towards Pattanduru Agrahara (ITPL)/ Whitefield. For those who alight at Garudacharpalya Metro Station, the next train towards Pattanduru Agrahara (ITPL) will be available within 3.5 minutes.

During the evening, the 5-minute headway will start early from Baiyappanahalli at 4.20pm instead of 4.40pm towards Mysore Road station, it added. The schedule of Green Line trains remains unchanged, according to BMRCL. *—Salar News*

RaGa meets devastated Hathras victims

HATHRAS/ALIGARH, 5 JULY

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday said there were lapses on the part of the administration in the Hathras stampede incident that killed over 100 people, but added that he did not want to make it a political issue.

Gandhi, after meeting the victims of the stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras on Friday morning, urged Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to release "maximum compensation" for the victims without any delay.

One of the family members who met Gandhi said he assured them that he will raise the issue in Parliament so that such incidents do not happen in future. Speaking to reporters in Hathras on Friday morning, Gandhi said, "It is a matter of grief that so many families have suffered, so many people lost their lives." "I don't want to speak from a political prism, but there have been some lapses on part of the administration. There have been mistakes, which should be identified," he said. *—PTI*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi meets families of the victims of Hathras stampede incident, in Pilkhana village of Aligarh, Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

>>>More on Page 3

THRISSUR ON ALERT

African Swine Flu breaks out in Kerala

THRISSUR, 5 JULY

An outbreak of African Swine Fever, a highly contagious and deadly swine disease that can affect both farm-raised and feral (wild) pigs, has been reported from a farm in a village in Kerala's Thrissur district, officials said on Friday.

Due to the outbreak of swine fever, which can be readily transmitted from one pig to another through direct contact with bodily fluids from an infected pig, the Thrissur district collector has ordered the culling of 310 pigs at a private farm in Thrissur district's Madakkathara panchayat, they said.

The area within a 1km radius of the affected farm has been declared a disease-affected area, and the area within a

PHOTO: PTI

10-km radius has been declared a disease surveillance area.

"The transportation of pork from the affected areas, the operation of such farms, and the movement of pigs, pork, and feed from the affected areas to other parts of the district, as well as the movement of these items from other areas into the affected area, have been prohibited until further orders," the release said.

The department will also conduct strict checks at checkposts and other entry points in the district to prevent the illegal transportation of pigs and pork from Thrissur or other areas, they said.

Following the confirmation of the disease in Madakkathara panchayat, precautionary measures will be taken in other areas of the district as well, officials said.

If the swine fever virus is detected in other areas, the municipal/government secretaries, village officers and rural development officials concerned should inform the relevant veterinary officer and then take the necessary steps to control the spread of the virus, they said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Yakshagana artiste Kumble Sridhara dies at 76

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Well-known Yakshagana artiste Kumble Shridhara Rao died on Friday in Puttur at the age of 76. He died on Friday after suffering from cardiac arrest. The artiste's career spanned six decades and he was most known for the female roles he played including Ammudevi in 'Dharmasthala Kshetra Mahatme' and Ambe in 'Bhishma Vijaya'. He later went on to don the roles of Ravana and Vali.

He started his career through the Ira Somanatheshwara Mela where assisted prominent artiste in the field. Rao hailed from Kumle, Kasargode in Kerala and lived in Berike near Dakshina Kannada's Shantinage. Rao has been honoured with Veerendra Heggade's coronation and Aatmalaya Academy of Art and Culture Award. *—Salar News*

FIR against 3 over death of worker at construction site

MANGALURU, 5 JULY

Mangaluru police has filed an FIR against three persons in connection with an accident at a construction site where a worker died, police said on Friday. The FIR was filed against Venugopal, the contractor of the project, and two others, they said. Chandan Kumar, a labourer was killed in a mudslide at the construction site on Wednesday while another worker was injured. According to Mangaluru city police Commissioner Anupam Aggarwal, investigation is still on to ascertain the cause of the incident. The Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board has sanctioned a compensation of Rs two lakh to the family of Chandan Kumar.*—PTI*

10 held for theft at Mangaluru PWD contractor's home

MANGALURU, 5 JULY

Ten people were arrested in connection with a dacoity at the house of a PWD contractor at Ulaibettu under Mangaluru Rural Police Station limits, police said here on Friday. City Police Commissioner Anupam Agarwal said seven of the arrested were from Kerala while two were from Neermarga and one from Bantwal. On 21 June, a gang of eight to nine masked men entered the house of contractor Padmanabha Kotyan, tied him up and beat him, threatened his wife and children and made away with cash and jewellery worth Rs 9 lakh. They also took a vehicle that belonged to the contractor and abandoned it at some distance before fleeing. According to police, four local persons had planned the robbery. *—PTI*

Chitrakala Parishath marks founder's birth anniversary

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath celebrated the 92nd birthday of its founder secretary MS Nanjunda Rao with an exhibition and conferring celebrated artist Jatin Das with MS Nanjunda Rao award on Friday. The programme was attended by parishath President BL Shankar and member Pushpa Dravid. Pushpa said, "The legacy of Nanjunda Rao must go on and we must appreciate all of his work in art and to the City. He devoted his life to building this institution and I was a witness to that." By hosting an exhibition before the programme, the organisation showcased the artwork of the faculties of Chitrakala Parishath. The exhibits featured pen drawings, etchings, stone art on canvas and pictures of deities. The title of the programme was 'Extended Visions of Pedagogy'. *—Salar News*

DKS started MUDA row to unseat CM: HDK

HDK claims that this is a conspiracy within Congress to trap and unseat the Chief Minister

CM Siddaramaiah, DyCM DK Shivakumar and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy *PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD*

MANDYA, 5 JULY

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy claimed on Friday that the alleged land scam in Mysuru Urban Development Authority was an "outcome" of power struggle between the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar.

"It's an old news. Why has it surfaced now? The MUDA scam is getting lots of publicity now. Who started it? The person who is anxious to become the next Chief Minister and is waiting to unseat Siddaramaiah has done it," Kumaraswamy told reporters here without directly naming Shivakumar.

The Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries, who is also the JD(S) second-in-command, said the "news" got prominence only to bring a "bad name" to the Chief Minister so that he can be removed from his post.

> The Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries, who is also the JD(S) second-in-command, said the "news" got prominence only to bring a "bad name" to the Chief Minister so that he can be removed from his post.

"This is a conspiracy within Congress to unseat the Chief Minister by hiring a team of lawyers and extracting documents from MUDA," Kumaraswamy alleged. "This is an attempt to trap the Chief Minister."

BJP has alleged irregularities in allotment of alternative sites to land losers, including Chief Minister's wife Parvathi, by MUDA.

Denying any wrongdoing, the Chief Minister had said the plots were given to his wife by MUDA in 2021 when BJP was in power.

Reacting to this, Kumaraswamy sought to know what the ruling Congress has been doing for the past one year after coming to power.

The Chief Minister said earlier this week housing sites allotted by MUDA under the 50:50 scheme to land losers have been put on hold pending an investigation into the alleged irregularities.

BJP has alleged that irregularities to the tune of Rs 4,000 crore had taken place in distribution of sites to land losers by MUDA. *—PTI*

HDK has gone mad, needs treatment: DKS

Bengaluru, 5 July

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar called Union Minister Kumaraswamy a madman and dubbed his allegations over MUDA site allocation as unfounded. Speaking to reporters at the Vidhana Soudha on Friday, Shivakumar stated, "Kumara swamy's allegations that I am involved in the MUDA scam are baseless. He has lost his mental balance and he needs treatment." Shivakumar said, "Some people can't sleep peacefully or think straight if they don't take my name," he said. *—Salar News*

HDK hits out at Congress over 'Janata Darshan'

MANDYA, 5 JULY

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Friday hit out at Congress government as he held a 'Janata Darshan' in his Lok Sabha constituency here without the presence of State officials.

"The State government is not letting me hold 'Janata Darshan' in Mandya," the JD(S) leader and former chief minister told reporters in the district headquarters town of Mysuru before heading for Mandya, adding, he has been told to cancel it.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah denied Kumaraswamy's charge. "Only the Chief Minister and the District-In-Charge Ministers can hold Janata Darshan. This rule is not new but has been there for the past many years," Siddaramaiah said.

The previous BJP government had also passed an order that even the Leader of Opposition has no powers to conduct a review meeting, he said. Siddaramaiah underlined that this rule was not made for Kumaraswamy but it has been in existence for the past many years. Kumaraswamy said: "They (Congress) have said: cancel 'Janata Darshan'. They even issued a guideline in the Cabinet meeting. I know who is involved in it." Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar said, "Let him conduct Janata Darshan for the people, who is stopping him? Officials follow certain protocols. Can I go to Delhi and use officials there? I don't know much about this and I don't have anything to do with it." *—Salar News*

> **Only the Chief Minister and the District-In-Charge Ministers can hold Janata Darshan. This rule is not new but has been there for the past many years**
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

State hikes scholarship for IAS, IRS students in Delhi to ₹15,000

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

State government has increased the monthly scholarship given to SC/ST students from Karnataka who are preparing for Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Revenue Service (IRS) and other competitive exams by residing in Delhi, said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday. The government increased the scholarship from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000.

The announcement was made during sub-plan/council meetings held in the City on Friday. "For 2024-25, Rs 39,121.46 crore has been allocated in the budget for 34 departments under Scheduled Castes Sub Plan and Tribal Sub Plan schemes. This year's allocation is Rs 3,900 crore more than the previous year," he said.

PHOTO: PTI

Additionally, a hi-tech library will be established in the hostel for SC/ST students in New Delhi. The Chief Minister said there is a need for Social Welfare Department and corporations to utilise the allocated funds efficiently and warned of action against negligence.

The Chief Minister said more number of Morarji Desai Residential Schools should be started in Hubballi and 75 per cent of seats should be reserved for local students and 25 per cent for students from other areas. Siddaramaiah also instructed Social Welfare Department officials to ensure government benefits reach rural and poor families and warned that officials who fail to inspect hostels will face suspension. *—Salar News*

AMID SPIKE IN CASES

State launches dengue awareness campaign

Students inspect mosquitoes during 'I am OneHealth' festival at Visvesvaraya Museum in Bengaluru on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

MANGALURU, 5 JULY

Amid a spike in dengue cases in Karnataka, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Friday launched an awareness campaign in this district headquarters town of Dakshina Kannada to eliminate breeding sites of Aedes mosquito that causes the vector borne disease.

He conducted a house-to-house inspection in parts of the city along with health workers and checked breeding areas of Aedes mosquitoes.

Rao, who is also district in-charge Minister, inspected places where Aedes mosquito larvae were produced in water stagnated in coconut shells, tubs and tyres and observed the measures being taken by Health Department staff to destroy them. He advised the local residents to be vigilant.

Speaking to reporters later, the Minister said the Department has launched a campaign to destroy breeding sites of Aedes mosquitoes every Friday for dengue control and urged the public to extend their cooperation. Health workers are engaged in creating awareness among people. People need to ensure that water does not stagnate in places around their houses. Aedes mosquito breeding sites are being identified and destroyed, he said. According to the data shared by the Health Department, total positive dengue cases reported in the State since January till 4 July was 6,676. *—PTI*

RENUKASWAMY CASE: DIRECTOR MILANA PROBED

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Kannada film director Milana Prakash was on Friday questioned by the police in the Renukaswamy murder case.

Actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, his co-star Pavithra Gowda and 15 others are in judicial custody in connection with the case.

Soon after Renukaswamy's murder, Darshan had gone for the shooting of the Kannada film titled 'Devil'.

The police recorded the statement of Prakash and former Deputy Mayor of Bengaluru Mohan Raj at Basaveshwara police station.

Meanwhile, Darshan's wife Vijayalakshmi Darshan wrote to Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda requesting him to set right records that she was the wife of the actor and not Pavithra Gowda. "While addressing the media initially, you wrongly addressed Smt Pavithra Gowda as Darshan Srinivas' wife, which was furthered by all including the Home Minister of Karnataka as well as the national media," she wrote in her letter. Vijayalakshmi said she is the only legally wedded wife of the 48-year-old actor. *—PTI*

Milana Prakash *PHOTO: X/@MILANAPRAKASH*

'VENDETTA POLITICS'

Cong slams PM for dip in rice supply to State

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Congress on Friday alleged "vendetta politics" on part of the Modi government for refusing to sell adequate rice to implement the 'Anna Bhagya Guarantee' in State last year.

Congress asked whether he would apologise to the people for "obstructing" their elected state government from implementing its schemes.

Congress General Secretary, In-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh said evidence has emerged showing that Narendra Modi's "vendetta-driven" decision as the Centre also increased India's food subsidy bill by tens of thousands of crores.

He alleged that the PM's "vendetta politics", aimed at obstructing the Congress and non-BJP state governments from implementing their programmes, has corroded India's federal system and cost the Indian taxpayer.

"On 13 June, 2023, the Modi government stopped selling rice to state governments under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic), reversing the Food Corporation of India's orders to Karnataka issued the day before," Ramesh said in a statement.

"This irrational policy was undertaken with the sole intention of disrupting the Karnataka government's Anna Bhagya Scheme, which doubles the quota of rice available to each individual entitled to grain under the National Food Security Act (2013)," he said.

"The claims made by the Modi government last year -- of depleted rice stocks owing to poor monsoon and high prices -- to justify its discontinuation of the sale of rice through OMSS(D) scheme were blatantly false," he claimed.

In reality, as revealed by a media report, the government is storing 50 million tonnes of rice, three times the required buffer of 13.54 million tonnes, he claimed. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

> On 13 June, 2023, the Modi government stopped selling rice to state governments under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic), reversing the Food Corporation of India's orders to Karnataka issued the day before

Governor appeals to youngsters to preserve religion

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Friday stressed the importance of non-violence in Jain philosophy and appealed to the younger generation to embrace and preserve religion and culture.

He was speaking after releasing a book titled 'Jain Purana Part-3 Acharya Charitra' at a function organised by All India Jain Forum here.

Gehlot emphasised the significance of religious literature in transmitting religion, culture, rituals and traditions from generation to generation.

He highlighted the importance of religion in keeping society organised and its impact on individuals religiously, socially, and spiritually.

He also stressed the importance of ahimsa (non-violence) in Jain philosophy and appealed to the younger generation to embrace and preserve religion and culture. . *—PTI*

Thaawarchand Gehlot *PHOTO: PTI*

Transport Dept seizes 133 bike taxis

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

On the first day of carrying out an enforcement drive against illegal bike taxis operating in the City, Regional Transport Officers seized 133 of them and suspended licence of drivers on Friday.

Additional Commissioner for Transport C Mallikarjuna told **Salar News**, "We have issued an order that bike taxis have been banned. I have instructed Regional Transport Officers to seize the bikes and suspend the licences of the drivers. This enforcement will continue until ride-hailing apps remove the bike-taxi service from their platforms."

Friday's crackdown follows a protest by more than 1,000 auto and cab drivers at the office of the Transport Department at Shanti Nagar on Thursday, demanding action against bike taxis operating in the City. As per Sections 72 and 73 of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, States may issue taxi permits to all kinds of vehicles, including two-wheelers.

However, Section 53(1)(b) of the Act says that transport vehicles should have a yellow number plate, and without a valid permit they should not be used as taxis.

The transport commissioner said, "None of the vehicles we seized on Friday had yellow number plates, which raises serious safety concerns." Nataraj Sharma, president of Federation of Karnataka State Private Transport Association, said, "Our only cause of concern was law and order not being followed in bike taxis, which raises a red flag on women's safety." *—Salar News*

File objections against Prajwal's bail: HC to SIT

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

High Court on Friday directed the Special Investigation Team to file its objections on a bail petition by former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse of several women.

"Let the objections be submitted to the court," a single judge bench of Justice Krishna S Dixit said.

The SIT is probing the cases against Revanna.

On 26 June, a special court had rejected the bail plea of Revanna, who is presently in judicial custody.

Revanna had moved the court for bail in the first case registered against him. *—PTI*

Prajwal Revanna *PHOTO: PTI*

NATIONAL SPACE DAY

ISRO to organise hackathon on 23 Aug

BENGALURU, 5 JULY

For the first National Space Day, which will fall on 23 August, to commemorate the safe landing of the Vikram Lander near the southern polar region of the moon, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be organising Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon.

Following the Vikram landing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that "National Space Day" will be celebrated on 23 August every year.

Announcing the hackathon on 4 July, Chairman of ISRO, S Somanath said 12 problem statements in the areas of geospatial domain, space science, image processing, and AI/ML areas are identified for the hackathon and declared open for undergraduate/ postgraduate/PhD students across the country.

According to him, a team of three to four students can participate and address the challenges with innovative solutions.

Initially, 100 teams will be selected based on their ideation and approach to problem-solving and later 30 teams will be shortlisted by an expert committee for 30 hours Grand Finale at NRSC, Hyderabad on 13 and 14 August.

The ISRO chief emphasised that the hackathon is being organised to create application-driven ecosystems and bring in innovation in space-based applications which will benefit both society and the nation.

He also said the innovative ideas generated from this hackathon could evolve into successful business models. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

> Announcing the hackathon on 4 July, Chairman of ISRO, S Somanath said 12 problem statements in the areas of geospatial domain are identified for the hackathon and declared open for undergraduate/ postgraduate/PhD students

PHOTO: PTI

2 TMC MLAs takes oath in West Bengal Assembly

KOLKATA, 5 JULY

West Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee on Friday administered the oath to two newly elected TMC MLAs, instead of the Deputy Speaker who was authorised by Governor CV Ananda Bose for the job. After a month-long impasse between the Raj Bhavan and the assembly, two TMC MLAs - Rayat Hossain Sarkar from Bhagwangola in Murshidabad district and Sayantika Banerjee from Baranagar on the northern outskirts of Kolkata - took oath during a special session of the state assembly. West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose wrote to President Droupadi Murmu, describing the administration of oaths to two newly elected TMC MLAs by the Assembly Speaker as a "violation of the Constitution," a Raj Bhavan official said *—PTI*

HC issues notice to Cong leaders on scribe Rajat's plea

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Delhi High Court on Friday issued notices to Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh, Pawan Khera and Ragini Nayak on a plea by veteran journalist Rajat Sharma claiming they have deliberately and wilfully not complied with the order directing them to remove alleged offensive social media posts against him. The court asked the defendants to file their reply within two weeks of service of notice and listed the matter for 22 August before the joint registrar. In an interim order on 14 June, High Court had directed the three Congress leaders to remove social media posts alleging that the journalist used "abusive language" on his show the day the Lok Sabha election results were announced. The court had said an irreparable loss and injury would be caused to plaintiff's reputation. *—PTI*

NCW initiates legal action against Mahua Moitra

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday said it has initiated legal action against Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra for her remarks against its chairperson Rekha Sharma. This came a day after TMC, commenting on a video posted on X showing NCW chairperson's arrival at the site of a stampede, wrote, "She is too busy holding up her boss's pajamas". NCW in a statement said that a formal complaint has been filed with the Delhi Police and a letter has been sent to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at the Parliament stating that Moitra's remarks are condemnable in strongest possible words and being a Member of Parliament, it is unbecoming of her stature. *—PTI*

Ex-YSRCP MLA held for allegedly raping minor

KURNOOL, 5 JULY

Andhra Pradesh police arrested former YSRCP MLA, J Sudhakar, for allegedly raping a minor girl repeatedly for over four years, an official said on Friday. Sudhakar, 50, former Kodumuru MLA was arrested on Thursday following a complaint by the 17-year-old girl who furnished 'video evidence' to police. Police arrested the former YSRCP MLA under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 376 and 506, including under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. According to police, a video of the girl being molested went viral before the formation of the new TDP-led government in the state but nobody came forward to lodge a complaint against the then incumbent MLA. Incidentally, the girl and her parents used to work as domestic help in Sudhakar's house. *—PTI*

UK PM wants 'new strategic partnership' with India

He seeks to deepen cooperation in FTA, security & tech

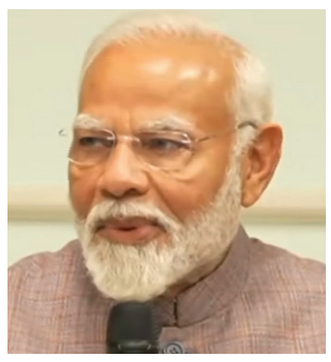
LONDON, 5 JULY

Keir Starmer, the human rights barrister elected Britain's new Prime Minister on Friday, pledged a "reset" not only for the country but also for the Labour Party's relationship with the Indian diaspora to pursue a "new strategic partnership", including an FTA, with India if his party won a strong mandate.

The other turnaround he has been working on is to try and re-build his party's relationship with British Indians, alienated under former leader Jeremy Corbyn over a perceived anti-India stance on Kashmir.

"Four and a half years of work changing the party, this is what it is for: a changed Labour Party ready to serve our country, ready to restore Britain to the service of working people," he declared in his victory speech.

As Prime Minister, his approach towards India is reflected in Labour's 2024 election manifesto, which commits to seeking a "new strategic partnership with India, including a free trade agreement, as well as deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology and climate change".



Keir Starmer and Narendra Modi PHOTO: PTI

"I have a clear message for you all today: this is a changed Labour Party," declared Starmer at the India Global Forum (IGF) last year, setting the tone for the party's India-UK outlook.

During a visit to the Shree Swaminarayan Temple in Kingsbury, north London, on the campaign trail last week, he sought to reassure British Hindus that there is "absolutely no place for Hinduphobia in Britain". It is a message he has been reiterating over the past few years during celebrations of Diwali and Holi, projecting Labour as ready to govern after 14 years in Opposition.

Some changes are expected in the approach to the Israel-Gaza crisis, as Labour plans to stop arms sales to Israel and wants to progress towards recognising the Palestinian state.

The overall sense of a Starmerite vision for the UK is of a leader who is itching to fix things that he feels have been broken because of the "chaos" of several leadership changes within a divided Conservative Party in past few years. *—PTI*

Starmer's party changes stance on Kashmir

One of the first challenges for Keir Starmer as the UK Prime Minister will be to restore Labour Party's ties with India, which has been tumultuous due to their remarks on Kashmir.

In 2019, under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the party had passed an emergency motion calling for international observers to "enter" Kashmir and demand the right of self-determination for its people. *—Salar News with agencies*

'PROCESS NOT FOLLOWED'

Bihar cancels Mahagathbandhan's Rs 3,600 cr tenders

PATNA, 5 JULY

Bihar government has cancelled tenders for rural water supply works worth Rs 3,600 crore floated during the previous Mahagathbandhan regime, Public Health Engineering Minister Niraj Kumar Singh said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, Singh said the decision was taken after an inquiry conducted by the department found that due process was not followed in floating these tenders and adequate areas were not covered.

"The department has cancelled tenders worth Rs 3,600 crore related to the rural water supply system given during the previous Mahagathbandhan government. Earlier, we had cancelled 350 tenders, worth Rs 826 crore, of the PHE Department. So far, the department has cancelled tenders worth more than Rs 4,400 that were finalised during the previous government," he said.

"Investigations revealed that due process was not followed in the tender process, and also adequate areas were not covered. Now, the department will float revised tenders for the work at the earliest," he added.

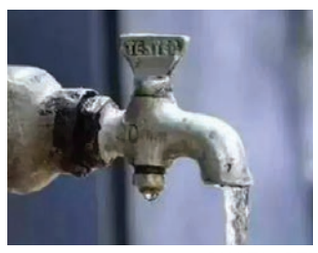


PHOTO: PTI

These tenders were related to the rural water supply works, including the installation of hand pumps and mini water supply systems, Singh said.

A total of 1,160 tenders, worth Rs 4600 crore, of the PHE Department were floated during the previous government, Singh said, refusing to reveal details about the irregularities detected.

The government has decided to install solar mini piped water supply systems with treatment units in rural areas of the state, the minister said. *—PTI*

BRS faces setback, 6 MLCs join Cong

HYDERABAD, 5 JULY

In a major setback to the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana, six party MLCs joined the ruling Congress late on Thursday night in the presence of state Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

BRS continues to suffer from desertions, with several leaders, including six MLAs, leaving the party after its defeat in the Assembly polls last year.

The six MLCs who switched over to the Congress are Dande Vithal, Bhanu Prasad Rao, MS Prabhakar, Boggarapu Dayanand, Yegge Mallesham and Baswaraju Saraiah, Congress sources said.

AICC in-charge of party affairs in Telangana Deepa Dasmunshi and other leaders were present when the BRS MLCs joined the Congress at the residence of CM Revanth Reddy, who is also the PCC president.

According to the Telangana Legislative Council website, BRS has 25 members and Congress four.

There are four nominated MLCs, two members from AIMIM, one each from BJP, PRTU, and one independent, while two seats are vacant in the 40-member House.

The MLCs joined the Congress soon after Revanth Reddy returned from a two-day trip to the national capital on Thursday night.

With the fresh defections, Congress' strength is set to go up to 10 in the Legislative Council. *—PTI*

TN advocates protest against 3 criminal laws

CHENNAI, 5 JULY

A large number of advocates in Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu staged a protest on Friday against the Sanskritised Hindi names for the three new criminal laws that came into effect across the country from 1 July and demanded their immediate withdrawal.

AIADMK advocates wing led by its secretary IS Inbadurai protested in front of Madras High Court protesting against the three new criminal laws - the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam and the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita - replacing the Indian Penal Code, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, respectively.

Inbadurai, a former legislator, later told reporters that these laws should immediately be revoked as they would cause confusion.

DMK advocate wing secretary NR Elango, who led a similar protest here, alleged these three criminal laws were "anti-democratic and anti-constitutional as they are named in Sanskrit."

Parliament, he said, has to take up the exercise of revisiting these laws. Otherwise the DMK's legal wing and advocate fraternity of Tamil Nadu will not rest, he added. *—PTI*

Lalu Prasad PHOTO: PTI

BJP: LALU'S CLAIM OF 'GOVT FALLING' IS HALLUCINATION

PATNA, 5 JULY

RJD president Lalu Prasad on Friday claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was "weak" and could "fall" as early as within a month.

The remark was promptly dismissed by BJP, which said the ailing septuagenarian was "hallucinating" and that the recent general elections were a reaffirmation of the people's faith in Modi's leadership.

Prasad, who spoke in a weak voice for less than 10 minutes, with younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav by his side, said " Modi government is weak (kamzor). It can fall any time. It can fall in August".

Reacting to Prasad's statements later, Union Minister Nityanand Rai, a former Bihar BJP president, accused the RJD supremo of hallucinating, using a colloquial Hindi phrase "Mungeri Lal ke hasin sapne."

"People have voted for Modi, who is now serving a record third term. Under his leadership and guided by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the NDA in Bihar will continue to defeat, which was disgraced during RJD's rule," Rai said.

BJP fell short of majority and a new government was formed with the help of allies like JD(U), headed by Nitish Kumar, who has been in and out of NDA more than once in the last one decade. *—PTI*

Govt sabotaging children's edu: Cong

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Congress slammed the Centre over the delay in publishing new Class 6 textbooks, alleging the Education Ministry is "sabotaging" the education of children after doing the same with the examination process through the "incompetent" National Testing Authority.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh hit out at the government over the issue, saying that either the "rot runs deep", or the incompetence scales new heights everyday.

In a post on X, he said, "After sabotaging the examination process through the incompetent National Testing Authority, the non-biological PM's Education Ministry is sabotaging the education of our children."

Cong slams govt over mobile phone tariff hike by 3 leading firms

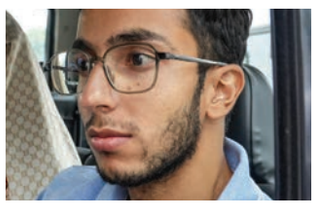
Hitting out at the government over three private firms increasing mobile service tariffs, the Congress on Friday accused it of "fleecing" 109 crore cell phone users and asked how can the firms be permitted to unilaterally increase rates without any oversight and regulation.

BJP government is fleecing 109 crore cell phone users by sanctioning profiteering by private cell companies, he said.

The total additional yearly payment from the common man seeking connectivity is Rs 34,824 crore. *—PTI*

Out on parole, Amritpal, Rashid take oath as MPs

Amritpal Singh PHOTO: ANI



Sheikh Abdul Rashid PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, who were granted parole to take oath as members of the Lok Sabha, were sworn in as MPs on Friday, amid heavy deployment of security personnel in and around the Parliament complex.

While Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, is in Delhi's Tihar jail in a terror funding case registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Singh is lodged in a prison in Assam's Dibrugarh district for offences under the National Security Act.

The MPs-elect took oath in the chamber of the Lok Sabha speaker after completing formalities, a source said.

Singh, 31, and Rashid, 56, won the recent Lok Sabha elections from Khadoor Sahib in Punjab and Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir, respectively, as Independents while being incarcerated.

For taking oath, Rashid was granted a two-hour custody parole, excluding the travel time from Tihar to Parliament, and Singh a four-day custody parole, beginning 5 July. *—PTI*

> **He is not a Khalistani supporter. By speaking about Punjab's rights and saving Punjab's youth (from drugs), can anyone become a supporter of Khalistan." - Mother of jailed radical Sikh preacher**
>
> -Amritpal Singh's Mother

Shiv Sena Punjab leader attacked with swords

LUDHIANA, 5 JULY

A Shiv Sena (Punjab) leader was grievously injured after he was attacked with swords by four unidentified assailants in full public view on Friday, police said. Sandeep Thapar, 58, was attacked when he came out of the office of Samvedna Trust near the Civil Hospital after attending a ceremony to mark the fourth death anniversary of the trust's founder-president Ravinder Arora.

In the purported video, the assailants dressed as Nihangs approached Thapar while he was on a scooter with his securityman riding pillion.

While Thapar was speaking to the assailants with folded hands, one of them suddenly attacked him with a sword while passersby looked on. Another assailant appears to be pushing Tharpar's securityman away. After Thapar fell down, a third assailant also started hitting Thapar with a sword. Later, two of the accused fled on Thapar's scooter. *—PTI*

OPERATION BHOLE BABA

Hunt for UP stampede key accused launched in 3 states

HATHRAS, 5 JULY

Uttar Pradesh government agencies have launched intensive searches across the state and in neighbouring Rajasthan and Haryana to trace Hathras stampede key accused Devprakash Madhukar, official sources said Friday.

A senior government official told PTI that the agencies, including the police, are also looking for preacher Surajpal alias Narayan Sakar Hari alias Bhole Baba for questioning in the case.

While Madhukar, the 'mukhya sevadar' (chief organiser of the satsang), is the only named accused in the FIR, Surajpal was not mentioned as accused.

"No one has been given a clean chit. The investigation is on and government agencies are searching for the main accused who is absconding." He also allegedly has assets worth 100 crore according to the reports.

The 'ashram' of preacher Narayan Sakar Hari alias Bhole Baba (inset), in Mainpuri PHOTO: PTI

SIT chief says over 90 statements recorded

Uttar Pradesh government's SIT probing the Hathras stampede has recorded 90 statements so far, the panel's chief Anupam Kulshrestha said.

"Definitely, the gathered evidence suggests culpability on part of the organisers of the event," she said. *—PTI*

CBI gets notice from HC over Kejri's bail plea

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Delhi High Court on Friday issued notice to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on a bail plea moved by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a case connected to the Excise Policy matter.

Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI on 26 June in the case.

The bench of Justice Neena Bansal sought response of the central probe agency in the matter and listed the matter for detail hearing on 17 July.

The plea stated that applicant Kejriwal is the national convenor of the national political party Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the sitting chief minister of Delhi who is being subjected to gross persecution and harassment for wholly malafide and extraneous considerations, is knocking at the doors of this Court seeking regular bail in this case.

He has recently approached the court challenging his illegal arrest as well as the patently routine remand orders passed by the trial court. *—ANI*

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Naidu seeks Centre's support to put Andhra on global map

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

A day after he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday outlined an ambitious roadmap to transform the state to put it on the world map in the next five years and emphasised the significance of Centre's backing.

Interacting with the media at the end of his visit, the chief of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) -- a key NDA ally -- also touched upon the sensitive issue of minority reservations, acknowledging existing challenges. The regional party has already asserted that the reservation given to Muslims was for social justice and not appeasement and will continue in the state.

On the TDP's relationship with the BJP-led NDA, Naidu stated: "We did not ask for any ministerial post from the Centre, not even during Vajpayee's time. Whatever was offered, we accepted" and recalled accepting the Lok Sabha Speaker's post during the Vajpayee era to maintain good relations with alliance.

He expressed satisfaction with the Centre's commitment to construct 135 government buildings. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Bieber fever reaches Mumbai for Ambani wedding

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

International pop sensation Justin Bieber, known for chartbusters such as 'Baby', 'Sorry', 'Love Yourself', and 'Boyfriend', flew in from Los Angeles here on Friday to perform at Anant Ambani-Radhika Merchant's sangeet ceremony. Bieber last visited India in 2017 for his maiden concert in the country. The two-time Grammy winner was dressed in a pink T-shirt, sweatpants and a red bucket hat. There are reports that Bieber, 30, is being paid USD 10 million to perform at the event, which will also see stage acts by top international singers Adele, Drake, and Lana Del Rey. Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's son Anant and his fiancee Radhika, daughter of industrialist Viren Merchant, are set to tie the knot on 12 July after months-long pre-wedding festivities. *—PTI*

5 dead after inhaling toxic gas inside Ch'garh well

JANJGIR-CHAMPA, 5 JULY

Five people, including a man and his two sons, died due to suspected inhalation of poisonous gas inside a well in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa on Friday, police said. The incident took place in Kikirda village under Birra police station area. The deceased are Ramchandra Jaiswal, 60; Ramesh Patel, 50; his two sons Rajendra Patel, 20; and Jitendra Patel, 25; and Tikeshwar Chandra, 25, Inspector General of Police (Bilaspur Range) Sanjeev Shukla said. Jaiswal entered the well to take out a wooden strip after it fell into it. When he fainted, his wife shouted for help following which three others from the Patel family in the neighbourhood entered the water body. When none came out, Chandra entered the well but he also became unconscious. *—PTI*

2 cops suspended for molesting Kedarnath pilgrim

DEHRADUN, 5 JULY

Two police sub-inspectors were suspended on charges of molesting a woman pilgrim from Madhya Pradesh in Kedarnath a year ago. The woman had come to visit Kedarnath in May, 2023 along with eight of her friends. After visiting the Himalayan temple, her friends returned by the heli service. However, she was left behind as there was no space in the helicopter. As there were no proper lodging arrangements at the temple, she sought Rawat's help. He asked her to stay at the police camp for the night saying a woman constable will be deployed there for her security. Later, Negi came to the camp under the influence of alcohol and molested her. *—PTI*

ITI prof fired for forcing students to do household work

LATUR, 5 JULY

A professor of the Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Maharashtra's Latur district has been suspended for allegedly exploiting and harassing some students by making them do her household chores, an official said on Friday. Manisha Khanapure, a professor at the ITI in Ausa, was suspended on July 2 for exploiting and harassing three students, principal Indira Ranbhidkar told PTI. The action has come after the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) submitted a memorandum to the resident deputy collector last week, alleging that the professor made students do household chores and clean toilets, etc, after threatening to award them low marks. A video of students clearing garbage in a house, purportedly of the professor, went viral on social media. *—PTI*

India logs all-time high of Rs 1.26T in defence production

This marks 16.7% growth ahead of Budget

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

India's annual defence production has hit a record high of approximately Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, with the Make in India programme crossing new milestones, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

This is ahead of the Union Budget.

The value of defence production in FY 2022-23 was Rs 1,08,684 crore, it added.

In a post on X, Singh also said that the government is committed to creating a more conducive regime for developing India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub.

"This reflects a growth of 16.7 per cent over the defence production of the previous financial year," the statement said.

Singh congratulated the Indian industry, including defence public sector undertakings and other public sector undertakings manufacturing defence items, and the private industry for the feat.

The defence ministry said that of "the total value of production (VoP) in 2023-24, about 79.2 per cent has been contributed by DPSUs/other PSUs and 20.8 per cent by the private sector".

The data received from all Defence Public Sector undertakings (DPSUs), other PSUs manufacturing defence items and private companies shows that in terms of absolute value, both DPSUs/PSUs and private sector have recorded a steady growth in defence production, the statement said.

The value of production in FY 2022-23 was Rs 1,08,684 crore *PHOTO: PTI*

- The feat has been achieved due to the policy reforms and initiatives and ease of doing business brought in by the government in the last 10 years with focus on attaining self-reliance, the ministry said.

The feat has been achieved due to the policy reforms and initiatives and ease of doing business brought in by the government in the last 10 years with focus on attaining self-reliance, the ministry said.

Defence exports touched a record-high of Rs 21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 32.5 per cent over the last fiscal when the figure was Rs 15,920 crore, it added.

In the last five years (since 2019-20), the value of defence production has been increasing steadily, and grown by over 60 per cent, the statement said and also shared year-wise data in this period. *—PTI*

People use umbrellas to shield themselves in Himachal's Shimla on Friday as heavy rains continue to lash several parts of state, leading to the closure of 77 roads; Assam Rifles personnel rescue people stranded due to flood in Singjamei, Imphal East, in Manipur *PHOTO: PTI*

Flood situation in Assam critical, 22L hit

GUWAHATI, 5 JULY

The flood situation in Assam was critical on Friday with nearly 22 lakh people affected and all major rivers flowing above the danger mark.

The town is witnessing waterlogging due to clogged drains, and with the Brahmaputra flowing above the danger level, it was posing more difficulties to drain out the water, officials said.

The locals urged Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to restore the power supply, but he said that it had been turned off to ensure that there were no mishaps due to electrocution.

Nearly 22 lakh people have been affected in 29 districts. The toll in this year's flood, landslide and storm has increased to 62, while three persons are missing.

Among the worst-hit districts are Dhubri where 6,48,806 people are affected, Darrang with 1,90,261 people hit and Cachar with 1,45,926 people affected. A total of 39,338 affected people have taken shelter in 698 relief camps, while 7,24,322 people have been provided with relief materials. An alert was issued in Kamrup (Metro) district where the Brahmaputra, Digaru and Kollong rivers were flowing above the danger marks with vast tracts of land inundated.

The Barak river was flowing above the danger mark at AP Ghat, BP Ghat, Chota Bakra and Fuletrak, while its tributary Dhaleswari was above the red mark in Gharmura, Katakhal in Matizuri and Kushiyara in Karimganj town. *—PTI*

Rickshaw pullers carry passengers through a flooded street after incessant rains, in Assam's Guwahati, on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Kerala cops say no proof on medical exam leak

T'PURAM, 5 JULY

Kerala Police on Friday said presently there is no evidence that anyone has received the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination question papers and answer keys as was circulated on social media a day ago.

The police, in a statement by the State Police Media Centre (SPMC), requested candidates to be careful and not fall for such scams or transfer money for the question papers.

It also said it has intensified investigation into the announcement on social media that the question papers and answer keys were available for sale.

Police said that any attempt to subvert the examination process was an offence and strict legal action would be taken against those who try to do so.

It further said that all types of social media were under strict surveillance 24 hours of the day.

PHOTO: PTI

After completing MBBS studies abroad, those who wish to practice in India are required to pass the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) conducted by the National Board of Examinations.

The City Cyber Crime Police in Thiruvananthapuram had on Thursday registered a case against groups that advertised, on Telegram groups, the sale of question papers for the 6 July exam. The case was registered under the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act 2024, making it the first case of its kind in the state to be registered under this law. *—PTI*

5 ROHINGYAS HELD IN TRIPURA FOR ENTERING INDIA

AGARTALA, 5 JULY

Five Rohingyas, including three women, were arrested in Tripura for allegedly entering India from Bangladesh without valid documents, police said on Friday.

During a routine check in North Tripura's Churaibari area, a police team intercepted a Guwahati-bound bus and asked passengers to show their identity but the five Rohingyas failed to produce any proof of their nationality, a senior officer said.

They were initially detained for interrogation. During questioning, the five Rohingyas admitted that they came from a camp in Bangladesh and were planning to go to Hyderabad via Guwahati," Churabari Police Station second officer-in-charge Pritimoy Chakma said. They crossed over the international border through Boxangar in Tripura's Sepahijala district, he said. *—PTI*

300-WORDS FOR 2 LIVES

Porsche crash accused submits essay for bail

The minor was driving a Porsche car under the influence of alcohol when it rammed into a two-wheeler, killing two people *PHOTO: PTI*

PUNE, 5 JULY

The 17-year-old minor allegedly involved in the Pune Porsche car crash that killed two techies has submitted a 300-word essay on road safety complying with the bail conditions of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), an official said on Friday.

The teenager submitted the essay to the JJB on Wednesday, the official said.

The juvenile was released from an observation home last month after the Bombay High Court held that the orders remanding him to the facility were illegal.

Hours after the fatal accident in the city's Kalyani Nagar area on 19 May, JJB had ordered that he be kept under the care and supervision of his parents and grandfather.

It also asked the minor to write a 300-word essay on road safety.

According to the police, the minor was driving a Porsche car under the influence of alcohol when it rammed into a two-wheeler, killing two software engineers.

Amid a nationwide outrage over his quick bail on lenient terms, the police moved JJB, seeking an amendment of the bail order. *—PTI*

'SURROGATES HAVE RIGHT TO AVAIL MATERNITY LEAVE'

BHUBANESWAR, 5 JULY

Orissa High Court has recently ruled that female employees who become mothers through surrogacy have the same right to maternity leave and other benefits as provided to natural and adoptive mothers. The single judge bench of Justice SK Panigrahi gave the ruling on 25 June while hearing a petition filed by Supriya Jena, a female Odisha Finance Service (OFS) officer, in 2020. Jena became a mother through surrogacy, but she was denied 180 days maternity leave by her higher authority in the Odisha government. So, she moved the high court against the government.

The court observed that a leave of 180 days is granted to female government servants on the adoption of a child up to one year of age in line with maternity leave as admissible to natural mothers for proper care of the adopted child.

It ruled that maternity leave should be granted to the employees who become mothers through surrogacy to ensure equal treatment and support for all new mothers, irrespective of how they become parents. *—ANI*

Take down post on centipede in Amul: HC

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Delhi High Court has directed a Noida-resident to remove her social media posts that alleged she found a centipede in a tub of Amul ice cream bought by her.

Justice Manmeet P S Arora, while dealing with a lawsuit by Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation which markets products under Amul brand, further restrained the customer from posting and uploading any other identical or similar content on social media platforms until further orders.

In a post on social media platform 'X' on 15 June, Deepa Devi had shared a picture purportedly showing a centipede inside her Amul ice cream tub that she ordered through an instant delivery app.The plaintiff company argued in High Court that the claim was false and incorrect as it was absolutely impossible for any foreign substance, let alone an insect, to be present in an ice cream tub packed at its facility. In an order passed on 4 July, the court observed that the non-cooperation of the customers who have also remained absent in the present proceedings, has given credence to the company's case. It said the customers were given an opportunity to participate in the court proceedings and make good the claim that they canvassed in social media post. *—PTI*

SHOTS FIRED NEAR RELIGIOUS INSTALLATION IN IMPHAL

IMPHAL, 5 JULY

Shots were fired targetting an under-construction religious installation in Imphal in the early hours of Friday, police said. The incident happened around 12.30 am at the Palace Compound, they said.

Police said security has been tightened in the area following the incident of firing.

Those behind the incident are yet to be identified, they said. A team of central forces was guarding the site where the incident of firing happened, officials said. *—PTI*

VICTORY PARADE AFTERMATH

Litter, shoes on Marine Drive; cars damaged

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

As a sea humanity turned up at the Mumbai's iconic Marine Drive promenade to give a hero's welcome to the T20 World Cup winning Indian team, this multitude also left behind loads of trash, including water bottles and footwear, that was later collected by the civic body in seven vehicles.

The cleanliness drive went on all through the intervening night of Thursday and Friday following the victory parade, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Friday.

Thousands of fans thronged the Marine Drive in south Mumbai to witness the victory parade of the Indian cricket team on Thursday evening.

The open bus parade started from the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Nariman Point after 7.30 pm and went till the Wankhede Stadium. This huge congregation also left behind piles of trash as footwear and water bottles were seen lying scattered on the stretch of road from where the victory parade passed.

Several cars parked around Marine Drive with dents on their roofs. Witnesses said fans climbed roofs of cars and danced in joy causing damage to them.

In a release, the BMC said that along with a large number of wrappers of food items and water bottles, a huge quantity of shoes and chappals (slippers), among other things, were collected during the cleanliness drive.

Of the total trash, shoes and chappals were collected in as many as five jeeps, it said, adding that two dumpers were also used to lift the garbage from the spot.

Instead of sending this junk to the dumping ground, all these items will be sent to recycling plants, the civic body added.

The cleanliness drive started at 11.30 pm on Thursday and ended at 8 am on Friday.

At least 11 people were rushed to hospitals for sustaining minor injuries or feeling dizzy due to massive crowding along the route of the victory parade. A woman fainted, apparently due to suffocation. Visuals showed a policeman carrying her on his shoulder, trying to get her away from the swarm of people. *—PTI*

Footwears of public lying along a road near Marine Drive after the victory parade for T20 World Cup winning Indian team *PHOTO: PTI*

Plea in HC argues against ₹10L aid to hooch victims

CHENNAI, 5 JULY

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Madras High Court to strike down the Tamil Nadu government order providing Rs 10 lakh compensation to all the victims of the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy.

When the PIL filed by Mohamed Ghouse came up for hearing on Friday, a division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice R Mahadevan and Justice Mohammed Shafiq orally said the compensation amount was on the higher side and posted after two weeks, further hearing of the case.

The victims were not freedom fighters or social activists who have lost their lives for the cause of the general public or for the sake of the society and had committed an illegal act by consuming spurious liquor, he submitted.

According to Ghouse, consuming illicit liquor was an illegal act. The state need not have pity on those who consumed illicit liquor and thereby committed an illegal act and consequently succumbed to such an act.

He said solatium should be given only to the victims of accidents and not to those who have committed an illegal act for their own pleasure.

The order of compensation to all the hooch tragedy victims was unreasonable and arbitrary and the consumers of illicit liquor must be denied the compensation and they must not be treated as victims, he added. *—PTI*

Madras HC *PHOTO: PTI*

ANNUAL RATH YATRA

Devotees during 'Netrotsav' ceremony ahead of the annual 'Rath Yatra', at Shree Jagannathji Mandir, in Ahmedabad, on Friday
PHOTO: PTI

WHAT HAPPENED & WHAT COMES NEXT?

UK's new Prime Minister Keir Starmer ***PHOTO: PTI***

Labour Party has won a landslide victory in the UK general election, sweeping hundreds of seats across the country and ending 14 years of Conservative rule.

Sir Keir Starmer is set to be appointed prime minister later on Friday, ending an era which has seen five different Conservative leaders running the country.

Rishi Sunak, the outgoing PM, acknowledging Labour had won and saying that he had called Sir Keir to congratulate him.

In his victory speech minutes later, the Labour leader promised "national renewal" and that he would put "country first, party second".

The result marks a stunning reversal of fortunes for the party. In 2019, led by the veteran left-wing politician Jeremy Corbyn, Labour suffered its worst electoral defeat in almost a century.

On the other side, Robert Buckland, a former Conservative minister who lost his seat, described it as "electoral Armageddon" for the Tories.

It is expected to be the party's worst result in almost 200 years, with a battle over the future direction of the party likely to commence in the coming days.

It's been a long night of results and there's plenty more action to come. Here's what's happening, and what it all means.

A huge Labour victory

Britain's House of Commons has 650 MPs, or members of parliament. Each of their "seats" represents an individual constituency - or area – somewhere in the country.

The expected 170-seat majority in the House of Commons for Labour is an enormous number but still short of the majority of 179 won by the party under Tony Blair in the 1997 election.

But for more perspective, the Conservatives' win in the 2019 election under Boris Johnson - seen as a very strong performance - saw them get a majority of 80 seats.

A reminder

If a party holds a majority, it means it doesn't need to rely on other parties to pass laws. The bigger the majority, the easier it is.

Big names fall one by one (but some survive)

As constituencies have declared their results live on television - with all candidates lined up next to each other on stage - there have been some major moments.

Perhaps the most notable was the defeat of Liz Truss. The former prime minister served just 49 days in Number 10 before being ousted by her party. She lost her seat early on Friday morning as dawn broke on her South West Norfolk constituency.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, the former Conservative business secretary and arch-Brexiteer, was one of the biggest names to suffer defeat. He lost his East Somerset and Hanham seat to Labour.

He told the BBC that he couldn't "blame anybody other than myself" for the loss but he took a "small silver lining" from the fact that the Conservatives would be "at least the official opposition" - a reference to fears they wouldn't even have that.

Grant Shapps, the defence secretary, looked rattled after losing his seat in southern England.

Leader of the House Penny Mordaunt, who ran against Rishi Sunak for the party leadership before he became prime minister, also lost her seat.

Jeremy Hunt, who serves as chancellor - the UK equivalent of a finance minister - held on to his seat but with a much-reduced majority.

Sunak also won his seat in Yorkshire with a comfortable majority of around 12,000 - but used his acceptance speech to concede and confirm his party had lost the election.

A new PM within a day

Things move pretty fast in British politics - there is very little time between an election result and the installation of the new prime minister.

Rishi Sunak will be out of 10 Downing Street - the British equivalent of the White House - within 24 hours, and Sir Keir Starmer will be installed swiftly afterwards.

But there is a process. Mr Sunak will offer his resignation to the King, and Sir Keir will formally invited by the monarch to form the next government in a meeting that normally happens at Buckingham Palace.

So who is Keir Starmer?

He's fairly new to politics, relatively speaking.

Sir Keir started his professional life as a barrister in the 1990s, and was appointed the director of public prosecutions, the most senior criminal prosecutor in England and Wales, in 2008.

He was first elected in the Holborn and St Pancras constituency in north London in 2015, and took over leadership of Labour after the party's poor 2019 general election, pledging to start a "new era" after the left-wing leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

Sir Keir was re-elected in the same constituency on Thursday, saying in his victory speech people were "ready for change" and promising an "end the politics of performance".

"The change begins right here because this is your democracy, your community, your future," he said. "You have voted. It's now time for us to deliver."

Nigel Farage finally becomes an MP

This election's insurgent party was Reform UK, the right-wing successor to the Brexit Party and the UK Independence Party.

Nigel Farage, its leader, finally won a seat on his eighth attempt - but his party's initial projection of 13 seats fizzled to four. That's still better than UKIP and the Brexit Party ever did, and Farage has been celebrating.

The party's share of the vote looks to be about 14 per cent

Reform drew controversy during the campaign over offensive statements made by some of its candidates and activists.

Farage will be joined in the House of Commons by former Conservative party deputy chairman Lee Anderson, Reform founder Richard Tice and Rupert Lowe.

—BBC News

SALAR سالار

India to embark on space & deep-sea missions by 2025

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday that by 2025, the world will witness the first Indian in space and another Indian embarking on a deep-sea mission.

Speaking at an event, Singh elaborated on India's advancements in space and marine exploration. He revealed that four astronauts, comprising three group captains and one wing commander, have been selected for India's first human space mission, Gaganyaan.

"Similarly, India's Deep-Sea Mission will see three Indians venture into the depths of the ocean in 2025," Singh said.

Addressing the audience, Singh also highlighted the significant infrastructure development in Northeast India over the past decade, citing it as a model of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for progress.

"Infrastructure overhaul in Northeast India in the last decade is the role model of PM Modi's development," Singh said.

Going further, he recalled the new airports made operational in the Northeast. Increase in the network of all-weather roads and highways, along with remote connectivity. The railways operating trains from Itanagar and new waterways that have been opened.

He categorically mentioned that, not only in terms of infrastructure but also in human resources development, it is commendable as recruiters in

Jitendra Singh ***PHOTO: ANI***

the hospitality and aviation industries are now visiting these states for talent acquisition.

Going further, he stated that the Prime Minister is fond of the region and preferred Mizoram to establish a 'Citrus Fruit Park: A Centre of Excellence' in Mizoram due to its favourable conditions.

"Record number of tourists in Kashmir nearly 2.5 crore in the last season is the testimony of development and peace," Singh said.

Jitendra Singh, when asked about the progress of Jammu and Kashmir in the last decade, said, "Record number of tourists visiting Kashmir nearly 2.5 crore in the last season is the testimony of development and peace in the region." He also added that 1 lakh people have already arrived for Amarnath Yatra which also highlights boom in domestic tourism. He also mentioned that terrorism is in its last phase."

The media group congratulated Jitendra Singh for making a hattrick by winning from Udhampur constituency and also being the Minister for the 3rd time. The Science and Technology Minister recalled the recent progress and shared the path of India's vision.

He said "Space sector is limited to launch rockets and satellites but it will also propel growth and positively impact agriculture, infrastructure, communication, healthcare etc. Land Record management, new geospatial policy, new space policy, and initiatives such as soil health card, DBT, land mapping etc. will boost farmer productivity."

"In 2022 we had just one space Startup and in 2024 after opening the space sector for private participation we have nearly 200 startups and many among them have global capacity. He also shared that in just few months 1000 crore of Private sector investment has come into Space sector," he added.

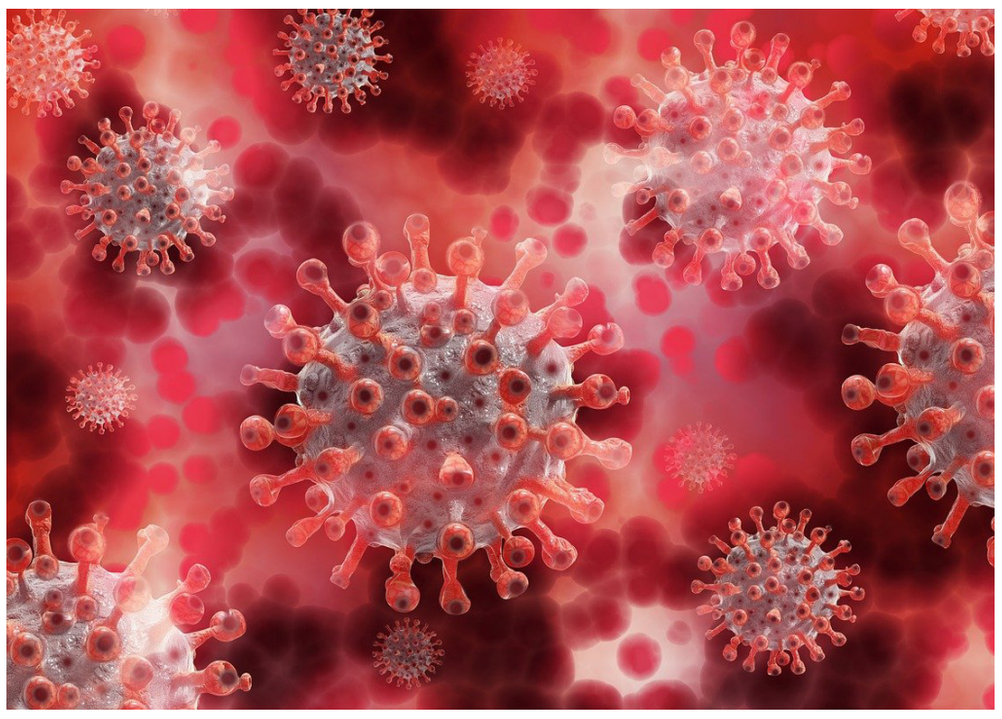
Jitendra Singh further said, "India is among the frontline nations in terms quantum technologies as we have National Quantum Mission".

He also highlighted India's Vast resources which are untapped such as Himalayan resources, Marine Resources of 7500km long coastline. The minister also shared that the government is successful in bringing agriculture and entrepreneurship together by Aroma Mission which promotes lavender cultivation and empowers farmers economically with the help of technology." *—ANI*

There are four astronauts, comprising three group captains and one wing commander, have been selected for India's first human space mission, Gaganyaan ***PHOTO: ISRO***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Study finds the reason why some of us got Covid while others didn't



Unvaccinated healthy volunteers with no prior history of Covid were exposed – via a nasal spray – to an extremely low dose of the original strain of SARS-CoV-2 ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Throughout the pandemic, one of the key questions on everyone's mind was why some people avoided getting Covid, while others caught the virus multiple times.

Through a collaboration between University College London, the Wellcome Sanger Institute and Imperial College London in the UK, we set out to answer this question using the world's first controlled "challenge trial" for Covid – where volunteers were deliberately exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid , so that it could be studied in great detail.

Unvaccinated healthy volunteers with no prior history of Covid were exposed – via a nasal spray – to an extremely low dose of the original strain of SARS-CoV-2. The volunteers were then closely monitored in a quarantine unit, with regular tests and samples taken to study their response to the virus in a highly controlled and safe environment.

For our recent study, published in Nature, we collected samples from tissue located midway between the nose and the throat as well as blood samples from 16 volunteers. These samples were taken before the participants were exposed to the virus, to give us a baseline measurement, and afterwards at regular intervals.

The samples were then processed and analysed using single-cell sequencing technology, which allowed us to extract and sequence the genetic material of individual cells. Using this cutting-edge technology, we could track the evolution of the disease in unprecedented detail, from pre-infection to recovery.

To our surprise, we found that, despite all the volunteers being carefully exposed to the exact same dose of the virus in the same manner, not everyone ended up testing positive for Covid.

In fact, we were able to divide the volunteers into three distinct infection groups (see illustration). Six out of the 16 volunteers developed typical mild Covid, testing positive for several days with cold-like symptoms. We referred to this group as the "sustained infection group".

Out of the ten volunteers who did not develop a sustained infection, suggesting that they were able to fight off the virus early on, three went on to develop an "intermediate" infection with intermittent single positive viral tests and limited symptoms. We called them the "transient infection group".

The final seven volunteers remained negative on testing and did not develop any symptoms. This was the "abortive infection group". This is the first confirmation of abortive infections, which were previously unproven. Despite differences in infection outcomes, participants in all groups shared some specific novel immune responses, including in those whose immune systems prevented the infection.

When we compared the timings of the cellular response between the three infection groups, we saw distinct patterns. For example, in the transiently infected volunteers where the virus was only briefly detected, we saw a strong and immediate accumulation of immune cells in the nose one day after infection.

This contrasted with the sustained infection group, where a more delayed response was seen, starting five days after infection and potentially enabling the virus to take hold in these volunteers.

In these people, we were able to identify cells stimulated by a key antiviral defence response in both the nose and the blood. This response, called the "interferon" response, is one of the ways our bodies signal to our immune system to help fight off viruses and other infections. We were surprised to find that this response was detected in the blood before it was detected in the nose, suggesting that the immune response spreads from the nose very quickly.

Protective gene

Lastly, we identified a specific gene called HLA-DQA2, which was expressed (activated to produce a protein) at a much higher level in the volunteers who did not go on to develop a sustained infection and could hence be used as a marker of protection. Therefore, we might be able to use this information and identify those who are probably going to be protected from severe Covid.

These findings help us fill in some gaps in our knowledge, painting a much more detailed picture regarding how our bodies react to a new virus, particularly in the first couple of days of an infection, which is crucial.

We can use this information to compare our data to other data we are currently generating, specifically where we are "challenging" volunteers to other viruses and more recent strains of Covid. In contrast to our current study, these will mostly include volunteers who have been vaccinated or naturally infected – that is, people who already have immunity.

Our study has significant implications for future treatments and vaccine development. By comparing our data to volunteers who have never been exposed to the virus with those who already have immunity, we may be able to identify new ways of inducing protection, while also helping the development of more effective vaccines for future pandemics. In essence, our research is a step towards better preparedness for the next pandemic.

—The Conversation

PHOTO: PTI

Brazil's Bolsonaro indicted in money laundering case

SAO PAULO, 5 JULY

The indictment of former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro for money laundering and criminal association in connection with undeclared diamonds from Saudi Arabia marked the Far-Right leader's second formal accusation with more potentially in store. Two sources with knowledge of the case confirmed Thursday's indictment by Federal Police, which followed another formal accusation in May against Bolsonaro for allegedly falsifying his Covid-19 vaccination certificate. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to speak publicly. Brazil's Supreme Court has yet to receive the police report with the latest indictment. *—AP*

Roadside blast kills 3 in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR, 5 JULY

A roadside blast killed at least three people and injured seven in northwest Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, rescue officials said. A Rescue 1122 spokesman said the blast occurred near Jalala Bridge in Tehsil Takht Bai in Mardan district. The rescue authorities immediately shifted the deceased and the injured to Mardan Medical Complex. On Wednesday, a former senator and three others were assassinated in a car bomb blast triggered through a remote-control device in restive northwest Pakistan, police said. Hidayat Ullah was in the Damadola area of Mamond Bajaur tribal district bordering Afghanistan in connection with a by-election campaign for his nephew Najeeb Ullah Khan when the blast occurred. The byelection for is due on 12 July. *—PTI*

2 dead after truck drives into July 4 celebrations

NEW YORK, 5 JULY

Two people were killed and nine others injured, four critically, when a pickup truck drove into a group celebrating the Fourth of July holiday in New York City, authorities said. A Ford F-150 came down a street "at a high rate of speed" shortly before 9 pm on Thursday. The truck went through an intersection and past a stop sign, drove onto the sidewalk and into Corlears Hook Park on Manhattan's Lower East Side, New York Police Department Chief Jeffrey Maddrey said. Two victims were confirmed dead at the scene, Maddrey said. The injured included four people who were in critical condition, three who were seriously injured and two with minor injuries. *—AP*

Man gets 15 yrs for stabbing S Korea's Oppn leader Lee

SEOUL, 5 JULY

A man who stabbed South Korea's Opposition leader in the neck earlier this year was sentenced to 15 years in prison on Friday. The knife-wielding man attacked Lee Jae-myung, head of the liberal Democratic Party, South Korea's biggest political party, in January after approaching him asking for his autograph at an event in the southeastern city of Busan. After being detained by police, he told investigators that he wanted to kill Lee to prevent him from becoming South Korea's president. The attack happened ahead of the country's crucial parliamentary elections in April, which ended with Lee's Democratic Party and other opposition parties winning a massive victory. A court verdict called the attack "a grave challenge" to the country's election systems. *—AP*

Ex-lawyer Starmer is the oldest UK PM

On day 1, Chief of Defense Staff will brief him on destructive power of Trident missiles

LONDON, 5 JULY

After a few hours of sleep to shake off a night of celebration and an audience with the king, Keir Starmer stepped through the front door of 10 Downing Street for the first time as Prime Minister on Friday.

When he did, he entered the alternate reality of a man who meets regularly with King Charles III and has ultimate control of Britain's nuclear missiles, all while adjusting to life in a creaking 17th century landmark and trying to balance his work and personal life.

Starmer, who was a musician and is a die-hard Arsenal is the oldest UK Prime Minister at 61.

On his first day in office, Starmer will get briefings from senior civil servants about key issues facing the government, receive congratulatory phone calls from world leaders and begin the process of appointing his Cabinet.

Nuclear trigger

One of the most sobering moments of any prime minister's first day on the job is the realisation that he now has the ultimate authority over whether to launch Britain's nuclear missiles.

In the UK, this is underscored when the country's top civil servant informs the new prime minister that he has to write "last resort letters" to the captains of Britain's four nuclear-armed submarines telling them what to do in the event of a nuclear attack that wipes out the civilian leadership. It is a duty unique to Britain, where there is no "nuclear football," the briefcase carrying targeting data and launch codes that accompanies the US President wherever he goes.

The letters are placed on board each of the submarines inside safes that are to be opened only if their captains are certain Britain has been attacked and the country's civilian leaders are dead. He will have to make is whether to live in the two-bedroom apartment above 10 Downing St., traditionally the home of Britain's leaders. *—AP*

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer shakes hands with his supporters at the Tate Modern, in London PHOTO: PTI

> If you are born without privilege, you don't have time for messing around
> -Keir Starmer

Keir Starmer with Britain's King Charles III in London, on Friday PHOTO: PTI

Pound sees a hike of 0.1%

Pound rose by nearly 0.1 per cent against the US dollar, boosting the bond & stock market. The investors who are expecting new reforms in the Planning laws see a new ray of hope as the Labour government has pledged to constructl 1.5million new homes to develop the Housing sector.

LARRY, THE CAT

Larry, the Downing Street cat was appointed by then prime minister David Cameron. It is a running joke that he has been the only symbol of stability in Downing Street as he managed to stay for 14 years.

RECORD NUMBER OF INDIAN-ORIGIN MPS IN PARL

LONDON, 5 JULY

A record number of around 26 Indian-origin members of Parliament have been elected to the House of Commons in the UK's general election as results were announced on Friday. Outgoing prime minister Rishi Sunak leads the Tory charge of British Indians.

Other prominent British Indian Tories holding on to their seats included former home secretaries, Suella Braverman and Priti Patel, as did Sunak's Goan-origin Cabinet ally Claire Coutinho. Gagan Mohindra , Shivani Raja also won. Seema Malhotra, Goan-origin Valerie Vaz, and Lisa Nandy won big margin in Wigan.

British Sikh MPs Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi both won back their seats. The newcomers Jas Athwal, Baggy Shanker, Satvir Kaur, Harpreet Uppal Warinder Juss (Wolverhampton West), Gurinder Josan (Smethwick), Kanishka Narayan (Vale of Glamorgan), Sonia Kumar (Dudley), Sureena Brackenbridge (Wolverhampton North East), Kirith Entwistle (Bolton North East), Jeevun Sandher (Loughborough) and Sojan Joseph (Ashford) among those set to take their seats in Parliament next week. Two Kannadigas Praful Nargund and Ravi Venkateshlost. *—AP*

WHO IS KEIR STARMER?

Britain's new Prime Minister

2 Sept, 1962: Born in London, England | Age: 61

Raised in a working-class family, where his father was a toolmaker and mother a nurse.

1987	Begins practice as Barrister at London's Inns of Court
2002	Appointed as Queen's Counsel and member of Foreign and Commonwealth Office's death penalty advisory panel
2008 -2013	Director of Public Prosecutions. Oversaw cases, including MPs' expenses and phone-hacking scandals
2014	Knighted by then Queen Elizabeth II
2015	Elected to House of Commons as MP for London constituency, Becomes Jeremy Corbyn's shadow home secretary
2020	Elected as Labour leader
2021	He tries to bring change in Labour laws regarding how party elects leaders

Liz Truss loses seat in historic defeat

Former prime minister Liz Truss of Conservative Party lost her South West Norfolk seat to Labour Party by 630 votes. She was targeted by Opposition for her disastrous mini-budget during the campaign. Lizz is the shortest-serving prime minister of UK.

AI candidate makes debut in polls, loses

AI candidate made its debut in UK elections as an independent candidate. Businessman, Steve Endacott introduced AI Steve powered by neural voice, to offer an alternative in politics. AI Steve only garnered 179 votes, representing 0.3% of the total.

Braverman returns to Parl despite controversy

Former home secretary Suella Braverman won the newly-created Fareham and Waterlooville constituency. After being dismissed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in 2023 for her controversial comments on pro-Palestine protests, Braverman criticised the government's handling of migration, calling for stricter measures.

RESEARCH: KASHMIRA DUTTA AND REHA FATHIMA

THE LAST 10 PRIME MINISTERS OF UK

- RISHI SUNAK — Conservative — 2022
- LIZ TRUSS — Conservative — 2022(for 45 days, the shortest term)
- ALEXANDER BORIS JOHNSON — Conservative: 2019
- THERESA MAY — Conservative — 2016
- DAVID CAMERON — Conservative — 2010
- GORDON BROWN — Labour — 2007
- TONY BLAIR — Labour — 1997
- JOHN MAJOR — Conservative — 1990
- MARGARET THATCHER — (1st woman PM) Conservative — 1979
- JAMES CALLAGHAN — Labour — 1976

4 Palestinians killed in Israel airstrike

JERUSALEM, 5 JULY

The Israeli military said on Friday it was conducting counterterrorism activity that included an airstrike in the area of the West Bank city of Jenin. Palestinian authorities said four people were killed.

The military said Israeli soldiers had "encircled a building where terrorists have barricaded themselves in" and the soldiers were exchanging fire, while an airstrike had "struck several armed terrorists" in the area.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said four people died but did not provide any information on their identities. No further details were immediately available from either side.

The clashes in Jenin, a known militant stronghold where the army frequently operates, came a day after an Israeli anti-settlement monitoring group said the government plans to build nearly 5,300 new homes in settlements in the occupied West Bank.

The construction plans revealed by the Peace Now group are part of the hard-line government's efforts to beef up settlements as part of a strategy of cementing Israel's control over the West Bank to prevent a future Palestinian state. The Palestinians seek the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza — areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war — for an independent state.

Violence has spiralled in the West Bank since the start of Israel's war in Gaza, sparked by the 7 October raid into southern Israel by Hamas militants who killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took more than 200 others as hostages.

The war has so far killed more than 38,000 Palestinians, Gaza's Health Ministry says. *—AP*

Palestinians displaced by the Israeli air offensive on the Gaza Strip flee on Monday PHOTO: PTI

39 fall ill after gas leak at Malaysian airport

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 JULY

At least 39 people have fallen ill after a gas leak at Malaysia's major international airport, Al Jazeera reported on Friday citing authorities.

Responding to a report of the incident, fire services on Thursday said that the chemical leak was reported at an aircraft engineering facility separate from the passenger terminal at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, as per the Selangor State Fire Department.

"A total of 39 victims suffered from dizziness and nausea," local rescue officer Muhammad Nur Khairi Samsumin said in a statement.

Authorities said that one of the patients was hospitalised and the other fourteen were transported to the air disaster unit for treatment, reported Al Jazeera. The impacted individuals are all employed by three companies that use the site.

There was no increased risk to public safety and the incident did not affect travelers or flights. According to the police, a skid tank that had been neglected for nine years was the source of the gas leak. *—ANI*

Myanmar regime sees new militia attacks

BANGKOK, 5 JULY

New fighting has broken out in northeastern Myanmar, bringing an end to a Chinese-brokered cease-fire and putting pressure on the military regime as it faces attacks from resistance forces on multiple fronts in the country's civil war.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of three powerful militias that launched a surprise joint offensive last October, renewed its attacks on regime positions last week in northeastern Shan state, which borders China, Laos and Thailand, and the neighbouring Mandalay region with the support of local forces there.

Since then, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army has joined in, and by Friday, combined forces from the two allied militias had reportedly encircled the strategically important city of Lashio, headquarters of the regime's northeastern military command.

This is the next phase of October's "1027" offensive, said Lway Yay Oo, spokesperson for the TNLA, which last week said the military provoked retaliation with artillery and airstrikes despite the cease-fire. "In phase two, our number one aim is the eradication of the military dictatorship, and number two is the protection and safety of local people," she said.

Thet Swe, a spokesperson for the military regime accused the militias of putting civilians in jeopardy by restarting the fighting. *—AP*

Hungary's Orbán meets Putin for talks in Moscow

BUDAPEST, 5 JULY

Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to Moscow on Friday for a rare meeting with a European leader to discuss peace proposals for Ukraine.

Orbán's visit comes only days after he made a similar unannounced trip to Ukraine, where he met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and proposed that Ukraine consider agreeing to an immediate ceasefire. "The number of countries that can talk to both warring sides is diminishing," he said. "Hungary is slowly becoming the only country that can speak to everyone." Putin suggested that Orbán had come to Moscow as a representative of the European Council, despite several European officials having condemned the visit. *—AP*

PAK'S PUNJAB TO BAN ONLINE MEDIA DURING MUHARRAM

LAHORE, 5 JULY

The government in Pakistan's Punjab province is now set to ban all social media platforms -- YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok -- for six days between 13 and 18 July, citing the need to control "hate material" during the Islamic month of Muharram.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's cabinet committee on law and order has recommended banning all social media platforms -- YouTube, X, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, among others -- during the 6th to 11th day of Muharram in Punjab, a province of over 120 million people, to "control hate material, misinformation to avoid sectarian violence", according to a notification issued here late Thursday night.

Sources said the Punjab government had initially deliberated that social media apps be shut down on Muharram 9 and 10. *—PTI*

NEPAL PM TO FACE FLOOR TEST ON 12 JULY

KATHMANDU, 5 JULY

Nepal's embattled Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost support from two major alliance partners earlier this week, is set to seek a vote of confidence from the House of Representatives on 12 July, it was announced on Thursday.

The prime minister sent a letter to the Parliament Secretariat asking the latter to make arrangements for the vote, local media reported.

Earlier, Prachanda had announced that he would not quit after the resignation of eight Cabinet ministers belonging to the largest party. *—PTI*

BAD TIMES

Migrants face 'deadly horrors' crossing Africa

GENEVA, 5 JULY

The United Nations (UN) and partners say more migrants and refugees in Africa are heading northward toward the Mediterranean and Europe, crossing perilous routes in the Sahara where criminal gangs subject them to enslavement, organ removal, rape, kidnapping for ransom and other abuses.

A report released on Friday by the UN refugee and migration agencies and the Mixed Migration Centre research group estimated that land routes in Africa are twice as deadly as the sea lanes across the Mediterranean — which is the deadliest maritime route for migrants in the world.

A video grab of rescuing migrants off Libya PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

The report said new conflict and instability in countries including Mali, Burkina Faso and Sudan have been behind a rise in the number of journeys toward the Mediterranean. But Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Guinea were the top countries of origin of migrants.

It comes as many politicians in Europe and beyond, in an important election year, have fanned or drawn support from anti-immigrant sentiment. But conflict, economic strife, repression and the impact of climate change in many countries in the developing world has fanned the flow of migrants across borders nonetheless — at the risk of physical abuse and death.

The authors admit there are no comprehensive statistics on deaths on the land routes in Africa. But refugee agency UNHCR has cited a more-than-tripling of the number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Tunisia — a key transit country for migrants aiming to get to Europe — between 2020 and 2023. *—AP*

Gold climbs ₹200; silver jumps ₹350

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 73,310 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday in line with global trends, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal settled at Rs 73,110 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver also climbed Rs 350 to Rs 93,400 per kg against Rs 93,050 per kg in the previous trade. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,363 per ounce, up USD 7 from the previous session. In addition, silver was quoted higher at USD 30.55 per ounce. In the previous session, it settled at USD 30.40 per ounce.

Market analysts said that swaps traders are now pricing in a 70 per cent chance of a rate cut by the US Fed in September. Gold is expected to trade with a positive bias. However, a robust job report will send the metal lower again. —*PTI*

Rupee rises 1 paisa to close at 83.49 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day almost flat at 83.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, as muted domestic equities and rise in crude oil prices capped gains for the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.48 and hit the intraday high of 83.45 and a low of 83.50 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.49 (provisional) against the dollar, 1 paisa higher than its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee pared its initial losses and settled for the day on an almost flat note at 83.50 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 104.96, lower by 0.16 per cent. —*PTI*

Foxconn Chairman Young Liu to visit India this year

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Taiwanese electronics giant Foxconn Chairman Young Liu plans to visit India this year. Liu received the Padma Bhushan Award from India Taipei Association Director General Manharsinh Yadav at Taipei on 4 July. He was conferred with Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award, on the eve of the 75th Republic Day this year. "... I am humbled to receive the award. I also want to say I am privileged to accept this award on behalf of all the fine women and men who work to do our part in growing local economies in India... I look forward to meeting Madam President in India this year," Liu said in a statement. He last visited India in July last year to attend the Semicon India conclave where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Foxconn's total investment in India is estimated to be in the range of USD 9-10 billion. —*PTI*

Coffee Day reports total default at ₹433.91 cr in Q1

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd has reported a total default of Rs 433.91 crore on payments of interest and repayment of principal amount on loans from banks, financial institutions, and unlisted debt securities as NCDs and NCRPS for the quarter ended 30 June, 2024. Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd (CDEL) which is pairing its debts through asset resolution, in a regulatory update said "the delay in debt servicing is due to liquidity crisis." There is no change in the default amount as the company has reported a similar amount in previous quarters. This is because the company is not adding interest from 2021. CDEL has reported a default of Rs 183.36 crore on the payment of the principal amount on loans or revolving facilities like cash credit from banks or financial institutions as of 30 June, 2024, —*PTI*

Starmer's win to pave way for India-UK FTA

Trade between India & UK climbs to $21.34B

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

With the Labour Party all set to come to power in the UK, India may expect approval to the proposed free trade agreement between the two nations, albeit with minor adjustments, economic think tank GTRI said on Friday.

Keir Starmer will officially become the UK's prime minister later in the day after his Labour Party gained a landslide majority in Thursday's parliamentary elections and dealt a bruising defeat to incumbent Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party.

Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said the Labour Party is expected to recognize the substantial benefits of the FTA as it opens access to a large and growing Indian market, bypassing high tariff barriers.

GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava expressed hope that the Labour Party will notice that the FTA with India offers a significant price advantage to the UK exporters, potentially boosting their exports to India almost immediately.

India & UK launched talks for an FTA in 2022 *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

However, GTRI suggested that India should focus on two issues - Carbon Border Adjustment Measure (CBAM) and non-traditional subjects like labour, environment, gender, and intellectual property rights - in the pact.

Historically, India has resisted incorporating these topics into FTAs as often require domestic policy changes.

It added that even if the UK agrees to eliminate tariffs on sectors like textiles, Indian exports might still need to meet stringent UK sustainability requirements and this could adversely affect Indian exports, especially in labour-intensive sectors.

India and the UK launched talks for an FTA in January 2022 to boost economic ties between the two nations.

The bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23. —*PTI*

AFTER 3RD STRAIGHT SESSION

Nifty hits lifetime high; Sensex falls from record mark

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

The broader NSE benchmark Nifty advanced further to settle at an all-time high for the third straight session on Friday, while the BSE gauge Sensex retreated from record to slip below the 80k level.

The broader NSE Nifty rose 21.70 points or 0.09 per cent to close at its lifetime high of 24,323.85.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 53.07 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 79,996.60. Among the 30-share Sensex pack, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro, Nestle India, Power Grid, ITC, JSW Steel and Sun Pharmaceuticals were the major gainers.

On the other hand, HDFC Bank, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Tata Motors, HCL Technologies and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"The domestic market traded with a mixed bias, with the heavy-weight banking sector acting as a laggard.

PHOTO: ANI

Adding to the worry are the top lending banks, which recorded a sequential decline in deposit growth in the June quarter.

"Midcap and Small Cap outperformed, and the respective BSE indices hit an all-time high," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Asian markets were closed on a mixed note on Thursday. The US markets were closed on Thursday for Independence Day. —*PTI*

Raymond shares hit 52-week high

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Shares of Raymond rallied more than 17 per cent on Friday after the textile major said it will demerge the real estate business to unlock the value for shareholders and harness growth potential in the Indian property market. The scrip of the company surged 17.30 per cent to trade at Rs 3,450.95 apiece on the BSE. On the NSE, Raymond shares soared 16.83 per cent to trade at Rs 3,434.75 per piece. In the intra-day trade, the stock of Raymond hit its 52-week high of Rs 3,480.35 and 3,484 on the BSE and NSE. The standalone operational revenue of the real estate division stood at Rs 1,592.65 crore, accounting for 24 per cent of the revenue. —*PTI*

Credit rating agencies gets new SEBI rules

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

- These modifications will be applicable, with effect from 1 August, 2024, the SEBI said in a circular

Markets regulator SEBI has issued new guidelines to streamline operations and enhance the ease of doing business for credit rating agencies.

The circular introduces specific timelines for dealing with appeals made by companies regarding rating actions carried out during periodic surveillance of ratings.

These modifications will be applicable, with effect from 1 August, 2024, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular on Thursday.

"In order to promote ease of doing business and bring about uniformity in dealing with appeals, based on consultation with stakeholders, including CRAs (Credit Rating Agencies), it has been decided to provide specific timelines for dealing with appeals made by the issuer in respect of rating actions carried out pursuant to periodic surveillance of ratings," it added.

The changes mandate that CRAs communicate ratings to companies within one working day of the rating committee meeting, with an outer limit to ensure promptness.

SEBI has also outlined timelines for certain types of disclosures, such as a list of non-cooperative issuers that should be updated daily, ensuring that stakeholders are promptly informed about issuers who fail to cooperate with rating agencies. —*PTI*

Developers seek tax rationale & low interest rates from Budget

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

A survey conducted by real estate association CREDAI and investment management company Colliers found that the majority of the real estate developers expect tax rationalization, sops for affordable housing, and single window clearance from Union Budget 2024, slated to be tabled sometime later this month.

Furthermore, as per the survey, developers hoped that GST-related input tax concession and interest rate reduction could provide financial elbowroom to developers and improve the financial viability of real estate projects.

As per the Developer Sentiment Survey conducted by CREDAI and Colliers, during April-May 2024, about half of surveyed developers are confident of buoyant residential demand in 2024. —*ANI*

Here are some of the key survey results conducted by CREDAI

- 53% of the developers feel that buyer enquiries and engagement increased in 2023.
- 45% of the developers saw a 10-20 per cent rise in construction costs in 2023.
- About half of the developers feel that residential demand would remain stable in 2024.
- 52% of the surveyed developers expect housing prices to increase in 2024.
- 25% of the developers are willing to explore plotted developments as an alternative business model.
- More than 80% of developers believe that NRI demand for residential properties will increase.

Data breach an attempt to tarnish image, says Airtel

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Telecom service provider Bharti Airtel on Friday denied reports of any breach of its customer data and said that such a claim was a desperate attempt to tarnish the brand's image.

"There has been a report alleging that Airtel customer data has been compromised. This is nothing short of a desperate attempt to tarnish Airtel's reputation by vested interests. We have done a thorough investigation and can confirm that there has been no breach whatsoever from Airtel systems," the telco said in a statement.

The statement comes after an account named 'xenZen' on the dark web claimed to have access to the latest database of over 375 million Airtel India customers and put it up for sale. —*PTI*

ISI mark mandatory for steel, aluminium

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The government has made it mandatory for stainless steel and aluminium kitchen utensils to conform to national quality standards, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) said on Friday, in a move aimed at enhancing consumer safety and product quality.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under Ministry of Commerce and Industry, issued a Quality Control Order on March 14, making the ISI mark compulsory for these kitchen utensils.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

According to BIS, the order prohibits the manufacture, import, sale, distribution, storage, or exhibition for sale of any stainless steel or aluminium utensils that do not bear the BIS standard mark.

Non-compliance with the order will attract penalties, underscoring the government's commitment to consumer safety and product integrity, it said.

This development follows the BIS' recent formulation of comprehensive standards for kitchen items, including IS 14756:2022 for stainless steel and IS 1660:2024 for aluminium utensils. —*PTI*

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

India's forex reserves decline by $651.99 billion

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

India's forex reserves dropped USD 1.713 billion to USD 651.997 billion for the week ended June 28, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said.

In the previous reporting week, the overall kitty had dropped USD 2.922 billion to USD 652.895 billion. The reserves had touched an all-time high of USD 655.817 billion as on June 7 this year.

For the week ended June 28, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased USD 1.252 billion to USD 572.881 billion

Gold reserves were down USD 427 million to USD 56.528 billion during the week, the RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF was up USD 1 million to USD 4.573 billion in the reporting week. —*PTI*

KALYAN JEWELLERS

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

KALYAN JEWELLERS REPORTS 27% REVENUE GROWTH

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Kalyan Jewellers on Friday reported a 27 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated revenue for the first quarter of the financial year 2024-25, driven by strong performance in both Indian and Middle Eastern markets.

The company had reported a consolidated net revenue of Rs 4,376 crore in the first quarter (April-June) of the 2023-24 fiscal year. The revenue from Middle East operations was up 16 per cent, contributing 15 per cent to the consolidated revenue.

Kalyan Jewellers aims to launch over 130 new showrooms in FY2025. —*PTI*

AMID HEATWAVE

Passenger vehicle retail sales dip 7% in June

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Passenger vehicle retail sales in India witnessed a 7 per cent on-year decline in June as severe heatwave conditions resulted in 15 per cent less showroom walk-ins, industry body FADA said on Friday.

Overall passenger vehicle registrations stood at 2,81,566 units last month, as compared to 3,02,000 units in June 2023.

Dealer feedback highlights challenges such as low customer inquiries and postponed purchase decisions.

Two-wheeler registrations rose 5 per cent year-on-year to 13,75,889 units in June.

Factors such as extreme heat resulted in 13 per cent less walk-ins by probable customers in showrooms.

Stalled monsoon and election-related market slowdowns particularly affected rural sales, which fell from 59.8 per cent in May to 58.6 per cent in June.

Commercial vehicle sales dropped 5 per cent to 72,747 units last month, from 76,364 units in June 2023.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Tractor sales last month declined 28 per cent year-on-year to 71,029 units in June.

While three-wheeler registrations rose 5 per cent to 94,321 units in June, as compared to 89,743 units in the year-ago month.

In the passenger vehicle segment, high inventory levels and ongoing low market sentiment necessitate cautious management, the industry body said. —*PTI*

Punjab University alies with NVIDIA to build AI schools

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology on Friday inked a pact with American chipmaker NVIDIA to establish Thapar |School of Advanced AI & Data Science.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by R R Vederah, Chairman, Board of Governors at Thapar University and Vishal Dhupar, Managing Director - Asia South at NVIDIA.

Thapar School of Advanced AI & Data Science (TSAAI) will be established at Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology (TIET) campus in Patiala, Punjab.

TIET will set up a dedicated data centre leveraging NVIDIA DGX systems, a statement said.

In addition, NVIDIA plans to extend the benefits of its inception programme, which is designed to support startups, to qualifying TIET-incubated AI startups.

"By the dawn of the first semester 2024-2025 academic year, the infrastructure will be ready to support a full undergraduate AI degree program, AI mandatory/elective courses across all disciplines, technical training for faculty and staff, research collaborations, and establishment of an AI startup ecosystem powered by NVIDIA edge computing. —*PTI*

ONION PRICE JUMPS

Veg thali gets dearer by 10% in June

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

The average cost of a vegetarian thali became dearer by 10 per cent in June due to the jump in onion, potato, and tomato prices, a report said on Friday.

However, a decline in the broiler price contributed to a decrease in the cost of a non-vegetarian meal, as per Crisil Market Intelligence and Analysis' monthly "Roti Rice Rate" report.

The cost of veg thali, which comprises roti, vegetables (onions, tomatoes and potatoes), rice, dal, curd and salad, increased 10 per cent to Rs 29.4 per plate in June from Rs 26.7 in the year-ago period, and was higher when compared to Rs 27.8 in May 2024, it said.

Price increased to Rs 29.4 per plate from Rs 26.7 *PHOTO: PIXABAY*

The overall hike in vegetarian thali prices is attributed to a 30 per cent increase in prices of tomato, 59 per cent in potato and 46 per cent in onion.

In the case of onion, there were lower arrivals due to a significant drop in rabi acreage, while potato witnessed lower yields due to unseasonal rainfall in March, it said.

In the case of non-vegetarian thali, which comprises all the same ingredients but dal gets replaced by chicken, the price declined to Rs 58 in June as compared to Rs 60.5 in the year-ago period, but was considerably higher when compared with the preceding May's price of Rs 55.9 per thali. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Diksha rises to tie in 4th place in Aramco series

LONDON, 5 JULY

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar shot an impressive bogey-free 5-under 68, best round of the second day, to rise 45 places to tied fourth spot at the Aramco Series, London . Another Indian, Tvesa Malik was 4-over and T-41st. Diksha, who was way down in T-49th place when the first round finally ended, made big amends in the second round as she carded 68 to get to 8-under for 36 holes to climb up the leader board, started her second round late in the afternoon from the 10th tee, had two birdies on the back nine on 11th and 16th, added three more on the first. Another Indian making the cut was Tvesa, runner-up at the Swiss Ladies Open last week. She was T-24 after the first round but fell dramatically on the back nine. *—PTI*

Canada Open: Rajawat enters men's singles QF

CANADA, 5 JULY

Rising Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat continued his fine form and advanced to the men's singles quarterfinal of the Canada Open with a straight-game win over Japan's Takuma Obayashi here. Rajawat, world no. 39, defeated 33rd ranked Obayashi 21-19 21-11 in 38 minutes on Thursday night to progress to the last-eight round, where he will be up against top seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark. Besides him, the third-seeded Indian women's doubles duo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand also progressed to the quarterfinals. The duo fought back from a game down to beat Natasja P Anthonisen of Denmark and Netherland's Alyssa Tirtosentono. They will next be up against Pei Shan Hsieh and En-Tzu Hung of Chinese Taipei. *—PTI*

Top Indian referee Uvena Fernandes retires

NEW DELHI, 4 JULY

India's Uvena Fernandes, who officiated as an assistant referee at the 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, has announced retirement, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Friday. She became the only Indian assistant referee in a FIFA World Cup final, having officiated at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2016 in Jordan. The 43-year-old, who hails from Goa, will continue to serve as a referee assessor and instructor." I have been a referee for almost 20 years, and I have already done justice to my badge. It is time to make way for the youngsters, I can contribute as an instructor to do justice to Indian football," Uvena, a senior officer in the Indian Air Force, said. *—PTI*

Maharashtra CM announces ₹11cr for T20 WC team

MUMBAI, 5 JULY

Eknath Shinde announced a cash reward of Rs 11 crore for the Indian cricket team. The announcement was made in the central hall of the Vidhan Bhavan (state legislature complex) where four Mumbai players from the team- Captain Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shivam Dubey were felicitated. CM Shinde in his speech expressed his delight over the team's victory against Arch-rivals Pakistan in the World Cup. He specifically praised Suryakumar Yadav's remarkable catch in the final match against South Africa. The CM noted the contribution of support team members Paras Mhambre and Arun Kanade by felicitating them, while also commending on Mumbai Police for their effective crowd management during the team's victory parade in south Mumbai on Thursday. *—AP*

Argentina reach Copa America SF, beat Ecuador

Martinez saves Ecuador's attempts in shootout

HOUSTON, 5 JULY

Defending champion Argentina advanced to the Copa America semifinals, beating Ecuador 4-2 on penalty kicks following a 1-1 draw after conceding a tying goal in second-half injury time.

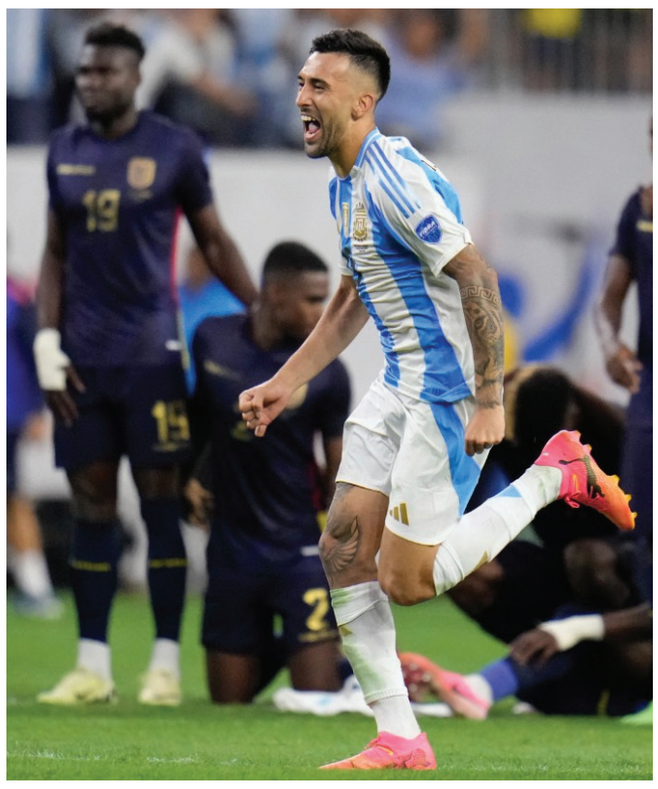
Lionel Messi on Thursday night put Argentina's first penalty kick off the crossbar but goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez saved Ecuador's first two attempts in the shootout and Nicolás Otamendi beat Alexander Domínguez with the winning kick.

Liisandro Martínez gave the Albiceleste a 35th-minute lead, but Kevin Rodríguez tied the score in the first minute of second-half stoppage time. Ecuador's Enner Valencia had put a penalty kick off a post in the 62nd minute after a hand ball by Rodrigo De Paul.

Seeking its third straight major title, Argentina advanced to the semifinals for the fifth straight Copa America and will play Venezuela or Canada on Tuesday at East Rutherford, New Jersey. Argentina is looking to win a record Copa America championship.

With Argentina going first in the shootout, Messi tried a Panenka and hit the crossbar.

Martínez, the goalkeeper in Argentina's shootout win over France in the 2022 World Cup final, saved shootout kicks by Ángel Mena and Alan Minda.



Argentina's Nicolás Gonzalez celebrates defeating Ecuador in a penalty shootout during Copa America quarterfinal soccer match on Thursday
PHOTO:@PREMIERLEAGUE

Julián Álvarez and Alexis Mac Allister converted to put Argentina ahead 2-0, and John Yeboah made Ecuador's third attempt. Gonzalo Montiel gave Argentina a 3-1 lead, Jordy Caicedo converted to keep Ecuador alive and Otamendi got the winner.

Liisandro Martínez put Argentina ahead in the 35th minute with a header after Mac Allister headed on Messi's corner kick. *—AP*

Pankaj Advani
PHHOTO: X@DDNEWSLIVE

ADVANI SAILS INTO ASIAN BILLIARDS FINAL

RIYADH, 5 JULY

Ace Indian cueist Pankaj Advani is one step away from registering a hat-trick of Asian Billiards titles as he advanced to the final after registering a comprehensive 5-0 win over compatriot Sourav Kothari here.

Advani's mastery of the billiards table was evident as he scored 100 in each frame.

The match began with Advani quickly taking control, as he scored 100, while Kothari, despite his best efforts, managed to score 29.

Advani continued in the same momentum in the second frame, breaking another 100 while Kothari scored 33.

Advani's prowess was on full display in the next three frames as he scored 101, 100 and 100 as compared to his rival's 38, 21 and 0.

Earlier in the quarterfinal, Advani got the better of another Indian Shrikrishna Suryanarayanan in identical 5-0 margin. Advani scored 100 but Shrikrishna put up a strong fight, managing a break of 78.

However, Advani's superior break-building ability gave him the edge, securing win in the first frame. *—PTI*

SUPERBET TOURNAMENT

Praggs holds Caruana; Gukesh draws with Giri

BUCHAREST, 5 JULY

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Fabiano Caruana of the United States, while world championship challenger D Gukesh also split points with Dutchman Anish Giri in the eighth and penultimate round of the Superbet Classic chess tournament here.

For the fourth time, the day did not produce a single decisive game and draws on all five boards meant that Caruana kept his slender half point lead going in to the final round in the 10-player round-robin tournament, a part of the Grand Chess tour.

With 5 points in his kitty from eight games, the American continued to be followed by Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh and Alireza Firouzja of France.Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France share the fifth spot on four points each ahead of Wesley So of the United States, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Giri on 3.5 points each.

Results after round 8: Alireza Firouzja (FRA, 4.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FID, 4); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5) drew with R Praggnaanandhaa (IND. 4.5); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (UZB, 3.5) drew with Deac Bogdan-Daniel (ROU, 3); D Gukesh (IND, 4.5) drew with Anish Giri (NED, 3.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (FRA, 4) drew with Wesley So (USA, 3.5). *—PTI*

R Praggnanandhaa (left) and D Gukesh. *PHOTO: PTI*

Palestinian soccer team plans to play World Cup qualifiers

JERUSALEM, 5 JULY

After advancing further than ever in World Cup qualifying, the Palestinian soccer team is determined to host a game for a change.

The football association has proposed playing games in the third stage of its Asian qualification campaign in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and already has support from a number of its opponents, starting against Jordan on 10 September.

The Palestinian team progressed through the second round of continental qualifying for the first time in its history in June but, because of the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, staged its "home" games in nearby Kuwait and Qatar.

"Playing at a neutral venue isn't permanent and was never meant to be so," Susan Shabali, the PFA's deputy president, told The Associated Press. "Faisal Al-Husseini is ready to host."

The 12,500-capacity Faisal Al-Husseini International Stadium is situated in the West Bank town of Al Ram. In 2019, it hosted the team's last competitive home game, a World Cup qualifier against Saudi Arabia that ended 0-0.

"We hope that all goes well," Shalabi said, adding that there'd been "no objections" from FIFA, soccer's international governing body, or the Asian Football Confederation.

Israel launched a major offensive in Gaza in response to an 7 October Hamas attack into southern Israel in which around 1,200 people were killed and another 250 people were abducted. *—AP*

The Palestinian team progressed through the second round of continental qualifying for the first time in June *PHOTO: X@JACK_HAVRAN*

India to face Zimbabwe without Ro-Ko

HARARE, 5 JULY

A new-look Indian T20 team would embark on a journey of self-discovery without their constant talismans, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, hoping to unearth their mainstays for the future in a five-match series against Zimbabwe starting here on Saturday.

Even as the euphoria of T20 World Cup triumph sweeps through the length and breadth of India, Shubman Gill, who was a reserve in that squad, will hit a refresh button along with a bunch of IPL performers.

All the fresh faces are expected to make their international debut during the series scheduled to be played entirely in the Zimbabwean capital.

While over the past few years, Rohit and Kohli have skipped a lot of bilateral series, especially in the shortest format, their international retirement from the format is bound to be felt more strongly.

Squads

India (first 2 games): Shubman Gill (c), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Abhishek Sharma, Rinku Singh, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Riyan Parag, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Mukesh Kumar, Tushar Deshpande, Sai Sudharsan, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Harshit Rana.

Zimbabwe: Sikandar Raza (captain), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Tendai Chatara, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Antum Naqvi, Richard Ngarava, Milton Shumba. *—PTI*

BELLINGHAM FREE TO PLAY AT EURO 2024, AVOIDS BAN

DUESSELDORF, 5 JULY

Jude Bellingham has avoided an immediate ban after the England midfielder appeared to make an offensive gesture in his team's win over Slovakia.

Bellingham will be available for England's game against Switzerland today for a place in the semifinals after UEFA on Friday imposed a one-game ban but said it "is not immediately enforced and is subject to a probationary period" of a year.

The Real Madrid midfielder will have to pay a fine of USD 32,500.

UEFA said the punishment was "for violating the basic rules of decent conduct" in the Slovakia game.

Bellingham seemed to make a gesture with his hand toward his crotch after scoring an overhead kick to level the score Sunday as England went on to win 2-1 in extra time.

Bellingham's goal with about 80 seconds left in the game saved England from a humiliating exit in the first knockout round. *—PTI*

T20 WOMEN'S MATCH

India lost to South Africa women in the first T20I by 12 runs, in Chennai, on Friday *PHOTO: X/@CRICKETWORLDCUP*

HOPEFUL FOR 2036 OLYMPICS

Modi interacts with Paris Open athletes

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Confident that India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics will be successful, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged athletes bound for this month's Paris Games to share their views on the arrangements in the French capital to help his government's ambitious plan to bring the quadrennial showpiece here.

"We are hoping to host the Olympics in 2036, it will help in creating a sporting atmosphere (in the country). Work is in progress to prepare infrastructure for it," he said in the interaction, which was attended by the national men's hockey team, the shooting contingent, boxers and track-and-field stars such as Neeraj Chopra among others. The complete video of the PM's light-hearted conversation with the athletes was shared by his office on Friday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the Indian contingent heading for the upcoming Paris Olympics on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

The upcoming Games will be held from 26 July to 11 August and India would be hoping to better its best ever tally of seven medals, including Chopra's historic javelin throw gold, achieved in the Tokyo Games. India has repeatedly asserted its desire to host the Games and found support from Thomas Bach. However, it would be no walk in the park to secure the rights as several other strong contenders such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia are also expected to throw their hats in the ring. *—PTI*

Andy Murray's Wimbledon farewell begins with loss

LONDON, 5 JULY

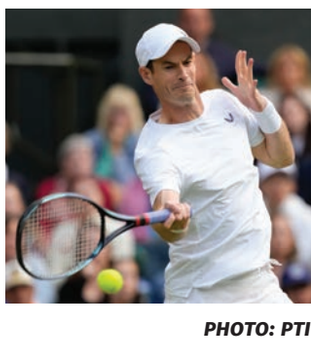


PHOTO: PTI

There were tears from Andy Murray. Standing ovations from the Centre Court crowd. A video tribute replete with messages from Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Venus Williams.

And, yes, a doubles match Murray played alongside his brother on Thursday, all part of the first stop on the two-time Wimbledon singles champion's farewell tour at a tournament that meant so much to him.

The Murrays lost 7-6(6) 6-4 in the first round of men's doubles against Rinky Hijikata and John Peers - but the result was, truly, beside the point on this evening.

"The match itself, it was tough, physically. I was fortunate I was even able to get on the court to play," said Murray. "It was pretty emotional," Murray said about the postmatch tribute. It was the first time a men's doubles first-round match was played in the event's main stadium in nearly 30 years *—AP*